KAIS M. FIRRO

# The Druzes in the Jewish state

## A Brief History

BRILL

THE DRUZES IN THE JEWISH STATE

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# THE DRUZES IN THE JEWISH STATE

*A Brief History*

BY

KAIS M. FIRRO

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*To my father, Madi, and my youngest son, Nizar*

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'Isfiya, 15 May 1998

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## NOTE ON TANSLITERATION

Throughout the text the use of diacritical marks in the English transliteration of Arabic and Hebrew names and terms has been kept to a minimum. Full transliteration can been found in the Index.

# INTRODUCTION

In 1994 I was asked by the editor of *Teva' ha-Dvarim* ("The Nature of Things"), a Hebrew periodical modeled on *National Geographic,* to contribute an article on the Druzes tailored to the general interest of his mainly Jewish Israeli readership. I responded with an article on Druze history and customs entitled "The Druzes in Israel and the Middle East." A few weeks later, still waiting to see the proofs I had been promised, I learned that not only had the article meanwhile come out in print, its title had been changed to "Covenant of Life, Covenant of Blood," with illustrations chosen to highlight the "contribution" the Druzes had made to the State of Israel through their service in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). My initial reaction of astonishment turned into outright disbelief when I found that not just the title but my entire text had been tampered with, to the extent that on a number of points it ran counter to my original meaning—the Druzes were now described, for example, as one "nation" among the mosaic of Middle Eastern nations, Dahir al-Umar, the Sunni sheikh who ruled northern Palestine in the eighteenth century, had become a "convert" to Druzism, and much else. Strong protestations on my part led the editor to publish an apology in his next issue whereby he explained that among other things he had thought it important to "praise the Druze nation" for the "loyalty" it had shown to the state of Israel even though the equality it had been promised had never come through. In my own text, of course, there had been no mention of any of this.

The incident shows in a nutshell how the Israeli media continue to cultivate a "self-image" of the Druzes in Israel that has little to do with reality but is, rather, an "image" the Israeli authorities and the Jewish majority have formed of them *in their own minds*: when what I had written deviated from or contradicted that "self-image," it was "only natural" for the editor to intervene and "revise," i.e., take on authorship of, my text.[1] It is an attitude that has been typical throughout of Israeli officials and so-called gov-

[1] *Teva' ha-Dvarim* 8 (February/March 1995), pp. 64-95, and the Editor's "Apology," *Teva' ha-Dvarim* 9 (April/May 1995), p. 2.

ernment advisers who purport to "know what is good and what is bad for the Druze community," living as it does

> in a region that has known many prophets and loonies, struggles and wars, hopes and frustrations, minorities set against majorities. (...) A god-foreordained nation (...) a nation/community/religion which .... was revealed to the world as an independent entity in the eleventh century.[2]

One only has to change the time frame and to substitute Jews for Druzes to see how this description fits to a T the "Jewish nation" as perceived by the Zionist movement. In other words, the Druzes are portrayed as the mirror image of the Jewish "nation/community/religion," an image in place already in the early 1930s when the Zionists set out to establish their first contacts with the Druzes:

> In fact, this nation—the Druzes—has special features and a special destiny that set it apart from other nations. In certain ways, it is similar to the Jewish nation because of a fundamental characteristic. Here, too, religion and nationalism are so united that it is difficult to separate between them. This nation is similar also to our Jewish nation in its diaspora ... and it is astonishing how the Druzes have succeeded in preserving their authenticity and independence. ... But there is another side which highlights the similarity between the Jews and the Druzes, and that is the destiny of the two nations—a destiny of minorities. The Druzes too suffered persecutions at the hands of the majority. ... All these [factors] have brought the Druzes closer to the destiny of the Jewish minority and made it possible for them to understand the psychology of the persecuted Jewish minority.[3]

This "image" has exerted, and still exerts, a near inescapable hold on the way Israeli scholars and journalists write about the Druzes. Through it, Israeli historians of the Druze ethnic community have been busy projecting the present into the past, all the way back in fact to the twelfth century. Following Ben-Zvi, Israeli scholars often quote Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela: "There come among [the Druzes] Jewish artisans and they trade with them in goods and

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[2] Quoted from the additions *Teva' ha-Dvarim*'s editor made to the text of my article.

[3] Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Isra'el Yishuva Tahat ha-Shilton ha-'Utmani* (repr. Jerusalem 1956). Part of Ben-Zvi's writings on the Druzes were translated into Arabic in 1954 under the title *al-Qura al-Durziyya fi Isra'il* ("The Druze Villages in Israel," selected pages from the writings of Ben-Tzvi, translated by Kamal al-Qasim, Rama [Israel] 1954), but compare al-Qasim, pp. 6 and 12, with Hebrew original, pp. 17-19, 41-42, 191-192.

services, and return home, and they *love the Jews*."[4] Or, as Aharon Layish tells us: "There is no tradition of persecution of Druzes by Jews, on the contrary, the destinies of these two persecuted minorities have a great deal in common."[5]

The historical record, however, suggests a different picture. Druze-Jewish relations prior to the twentieth century did not much differ from the relations the Druzes traditionally maintained with other ethnic communities and groups in the area. At certain times and in certain places these were good and served mutual interests, but there were also periods of friction and bloody clashes, as for example in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries around Safad,[6] or towards the end of the nineteenth century when Druzes were unable to prevent Jewish colonialists from taking over and settling in their village of al-Mtilla.[7]

When Israeli historiography depicts the relations that developed between Druzes and Jews during the Mandatory period as the "continuation" of "ancient" common ties, it again constructs the past according to the needs of the present. The image outlined above soon became all-important on the *ideological* level where it was used to explain the "cooperative attitude" the Druzes "displayed" towards the Zionist enterprise. But this could be done only by downplaying or outright ignoring the historical circumstances then prevailing in Palestine, more in particular the actual state of the country's economy, the singular interests of the Druze elite, the wider Zionist-Palestinian conflict and the impact it was having on these relations, and—last but not least—the policy the Zionists and, after 1948, the Israelis pursued in order to *foster* this "cooperative" attitude.

As the present study shows, Israeli decision makers used and continue to use the myth of Druze "cooperation"—notably dur-

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[4] Quoted in Ben-Zvi, *Eretz Isra'el*, p. 208 (Arabic version, p. 6, with some differences), and in Gabriel Ben-Dor, *The Druzes in Israel, A Political Study* (Jerusalem 1979), p. 98 (italics added).

[5] Aharon Layish, "*Taqiyya* among the Druzes," *Asian and African Studies* 19/3 (November 1985), p. 277; see also Ben-Dor, pp. 97-99.

[6] Cf. Y. Shavit (ed.), *Toldot Eretz Isra'el*, 9 vols. (Jerusalem 1981-1982), vol. 7, p. 229. Israeli scholars and writers frequently borrow the above image Ben-Zvi paints of the Druzes; he himself was well aware, however, of clashes in the past; see, e.g., Ben Zvi, *Eretz Isra'el*, pp. 208, 212.

[7] Metula, today an Israeli town, was until 1900 the Druze village of Mtilla. It was abandoned by the Druzes after Jewish settlers succeeded in buying up the lands of the village from the Shi'i landlord.

ing the Mandatory period—to indoctrinate each new generation of Druzes on this point through the educational system and the media. Again, the historical picture is a different one: ordinary Druzes as well as their "leaders" kept their distance from any involvement in a conflict that, anyway, they viewed in purely religious terms, i.e., as a struggle between Jews and Sunnis.

What is more, before 1948 and even during the war over Palestine, Zionist officials were well aware that the majority of the Druzes were largely indifferent toward the conflict and were taking up a position of neutrality. The main aim of the Zionists during the Mandatory period was to preserve this neutrality and to use a small number of Druzes who were found willing to collaborate with them to prevent the Druzes in Syria and Lebanon from taking the side of the Palestinians in the conflict. In this sense, the usefulness for the Zionists of a tiny minority of not more than 13,000—which is all the Druzes in Palestine amounted to at the time—stemmed from their alleged "ability" to convince the leaders of the Druze communities in Syria and Lebanon to stay out of the conflict, pleading that only their non-interference could safeguard the "weak" and "small" community in Palestine. These Druze collaborators were also involved in counter activities during the war of 1948 when Druzes from Syria and Lebanon were joining forces with their Palestinian brethren against the Zionists.

With the Arab defeat in 1948, the "importance" of the Druze minority in what was now the state of Israel only increased, since their "cooperation" could be used to achieve three main purposes: to alienate the Druzes from the other Arab communities in the new state and vice-versa and so create "good" Arabs and "bad" Arabs; through them to influence the relations the Druzes in Syria maintained with that country's government; and to turn the Druzes into a show case for the world at large of the "benevolent attitude" the newly created Jewish state was willing to adopt towards "non-hostile" minorities within its territory.

Israel has no "Druze policy" per se—there is an Arab-Palestinian policy[8] of which Druze affairs form a part and for the "success" of

[8] For useful studies, see Elia T. Zureik, *The Palestinians in Israel: A Study in Internal Colonialism* (London 1979); Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (New York 1976) and Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel's Control of a National Minority* (Austin, Texas 1980). See also Ilan Pappé, "An Uneasy Coexistence: Arabs and Jews in the First Decade of Statehood," in S. Ilan Troen and Noah Lucas (eds.), *Israel. The First Decade of Independence* (Albany, NY 1995), pp. 617-658.

which Druze cooperation is a crucial element. In order to encourage this kind of cooperation Zionist activists during the Mandatory period and Israeli officials after 1948 have gone out of their way to encourage Druze "particularism."

When, in the early 1950s, Haim Blanc asked himself, "Are the Druzes Arabs?" he concluded that

> As it stands [this question is] unanswerable, since the term "Arabs" is used loosely to cover a multitude of meanings ... In a cultural sense, however, the Druzes are not only "Arabs" but, as it were, "Arabs with a vengeance." ... The distinctiveness of the Druzes is, nevertheless, undoubted, and its origins must be sought in their religion. [The community] was born and grew in a hostile environment; it therefore adopted the principle of *taqiyya*, a sort of protective coloring with religious affiliation, to be "Christian with the Christians, and Muslim with the Muslims"... The most recent instance of this outward assimilation may be seen in present-day [1948-1952] Israel.[9]

It was "insights" such as these into the "ability" of the Druzes to "adapt" to new political constellations that were grist for the mill of Israeli policy makers, and Blanc was soon invited by the "Advisor of the Prime Minister for Arab Affairs" to write a booklet on the Druzes,[10] intended to give the state's officials a better idea of who the Druzes were and what could be done with their "ability to cooperate and adapt." Significantly, Blanc had no access to any of the Druze scriptures but relied solely on the works of Silvestre de Sacy and other European travelers and scholars.[11]

Even today Israeli officials, journalists as well as scholars continue to follow Blanc in their notion that *taqiyya* explains why, because of the "cooperative attitude" it prescribes, the Druzes could so successfully adapt to Israeli political reality.[12] Outlining the difference, as he saw it, between the political behavior of the Druzes in Syria (where Arab nationalism prevails) and the Druzes in Isra-

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[9] For further details, cf. Kais M. Firro, *A History of the Druzes* (Leiden 1992), pp. 316-331.

[10] See Haim Blanc, "Druze Particularism: Modern Aspects of an Old Problem," *Middle Eastern Affairs* 3 (November 1952), pp. 315-321.

[11] Silvestre de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes* (Paris 1838, repr. Amsterdam 1964); Philip Hitti, *The Origin of the Druze People and Religion* (New York 1928); N. (Capitaine) Bouron, *Les Druzes. Histoire du Liban et la Montagne hauranaise* (Paris 1938), and C.F. Volney, *Voyage en Egypte et en Syrie 1783, 1784, 1785* (repr. Paris 1959).

[12] Even someone like Ben-Dor, in spite of his interdisciplinary approach, views *taqiyya* as the key to understanding the Druzes and relies on Blanc's notion of *taqiyya* as "the ability of the Druzes to deceive strangers" and to bargain successfully with foreigners; Ben-Dor, pp. 52-82 (quote on p. 75).

el (where a process of "integration" is taking place), Yehuda Oliva wrote in 1980: "The Druze custom known as *Taqiyya* is relevant in this context. *Taqiyya*, the custom of concealment ... explains [this difference]," quoting a passage from Blanc which Blanc himself had found in a book by a Lebanese Christian, Jubra'il al-Halabi (Blanc takes him to be a Druze): "The *taqiyya* is an integral part of the [Druze] faith and its commandments ... [and] the modern Druze translates it into a political opportunist culture."[13] Joshua Teitelbaum follows much the same method when he attempts to understand contemporary attitudes of the Druzes through *taqiyya*: "[*Taqiyya*] is mentioned explicitly in the Druze writings, and its social origins are found in the history of the community ... In modern times it is hard to distinguish between the practice of *taqiyya* and every-day political opportunism."[14]

Only because all of these writers went back to Blanc who himself relied solely on secondary sources could it happen that they turned the *custom* of *taqiyya* into a *religious principle*. As it is, *taqiyya* does not appear anywhere in the writings the Druzes venerate as scriptures, their Epistles, but came into existence only as result of the persecutions the sect suffered soon after its establishment in the eleventh century.[15] Thus having misconstrued *taqiyya*, Israeli scholars went on to use the concept as a passe-partout that helped them "explain" every single aspect of the ancient as well as modern way of life of the Druzes: "*taqiyya*" has become a primordial principle, the "essence" of Druze existence.

In his study on "*Taqiyya* among the Druzes," Aharon Layish relies on and quotes Brayer who "holds that [the first propagator of the faith] Hamza ibn Ali's writings contain no express injunction to

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[13] The quotation from al-Halabi is: "Our lord commanded that we conceal ourselves within the predominating religion regardless of what it is..."; cf. Yehuda Oliva, "Political Involvement of the Druze in Israel" in Nissim Dana (ed.), *The Druze, A Religious Community in Transition* (Jerusalem 1980), p. 124. The same quotation can be found in different forms and translations in many Israeli books and articles; see Firro, *History*, pp. 21-22, also on the relation between the Druze faith and *taqiyya*.

[14] Joshua Teitelbaum, "Ideology and Conflict in the Middle East Minority: the Case of the Druze Initiative Committee in Israel," *Orient* 26 (1985), p. 342.

[15] For further details, see below, Chapter 1; cf. also Firro, *History*, pp. 8-23.

practice *taqiyya*, and Baha' al-Din al-Muqtana [the second propagator] even encouraged public avowal of the faith in times of crisis."[16] However, Layish is led up the garden path when he decides to rely on "Anwar Yasin."[17] Following Yasin, Layish concludes that *taqiyya* has a whole scala of meanings, such as "flattery, smooth talk, protecting, deceit, falsehood, concealment of the truth, religious duty, and ability of adaptation,"[18] which he then incorporates in his description of "the behavioral pattern" of the Druzes.[19] Not surprisingly, Layish finds *taqiyya* virtually everywhere: in matrimonial law, betrothal ceremonies, succession, etc. Even when polygamy and temporary marriages show up among the Druzes, Layish sees them "as manifestations" of *taqiyya*.[20] Historical events, from the battle of Marj Dabiq in 1516, which enabled the Ottomans to occupy Greater Syria, to "the participation of the Druzes in the Arab national movement in Syria and the Druze claim to be ethnic Arabs" are for Layish "manifestations of *taqiyya*."[21] When, as Layish claims, "the political behavior of the Druzes in Israel is also determined by considerations of self-preservation and a sober appreciation of the balance of forces in the country and the region," little more is needed to see the refusal of the Syrian Druzes on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to accept Israeli identity cards—which would have implied imposed Israeli nationality—as *taqiyya* towards the regime in Syria.[22]

The approach is, of course, misleading: as indeed a passe-partout that fits every occasion and regards every aspect of Druze life as a cover for something else, something hidden and invisible, it led Blanc *con suis* to suggest openly to their readers to distrust the Druzes because their behavior was "a result of [their] tendency to dissimulate in appearance to the majority."[23]

What all this amounts to is that *taqiyya* paradoxically has become

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[16] Layish, "*Taqiyya*," p. 246, relying on D. Brayer, "The Origins of the Druze Religion," *Der Islam* 52 (1975, part 1), pp. 49-51; for details on the Druze faith, see Brayer, *Der Islam* 53 (1976, part 2).

[17] "Anwar Yasin" and "Abu Musa al-Hariri" are pseudonyms of one and the same author who, during the civil war in Lebanon, published a series of books on the Druzes and Alawis intended as war propaganda against them. Layish appears to be unaware of this.

[18] Layish lists all the Arabic terms as given by Yasin: Layish, pp. 246-247.

[19] Ibid., p. 246.

[20] Ibid., pp. 259-275.

[21] Ibid., p. 275.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Blanc, *Ha-Druzim* (Jerusalem 1938), p. 133.

a reliable tool, not for gauging the cultural and political behavior the Druzes have been adopting vis-à-vis the outside world, but for gaining an insight into the "behavioral pattern" that Israeli officials have been displaying through the years vis-à-vis the Druzes.

A few words may suffice to introduce the approach I have taken in the pages that follow. Ethnic studies have flourished, particularly during the past two or three decades, in an on-going debate among sociologists, political scientists and historians on issues of ethnicity, nationalism, intercommunal relations in multi-communal states, and many others. Two main theoretical approaches stand out, primordialist and instrumentalist. For the former, loyalty to a linguistic group or religious community comes first, is "primordial," and attachment to primordial bonds forms the fundamental inspiration for the way people organize their social and political realities. As Clifford Geertz has phrased it,

> By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens"—or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens"—of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices.[24]

Such recent phenomena as the nation-state and processes of "modernization," far from weakening them, seem to have reinforced these primordial attachments, giving them an extra twist in the process:

> In modern societies the lifting of such ties to the level of political supremacy—though it has, of course, occurred and may occur—has more and more to be deplored as pathological. To an increasing degree national unity is maintained ... by a vague, intermittent and routine allegiance to the civil state, supplemented to a greater or lesser extent by government use of police powers and ideological exhortation.[25]

Not surprisingly therefore, instrumentalists view ethnicity and ethnopolitics as tools, instruments, in the service of certain groups and individuals in order to promote their own interests. Culture,

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[24] Clifford Geertz, "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," in Clifford Geertz (ed.), *Old Societies and New States: The Quest for Modernity in Asia and Africa* (New York 1963), p. 109.

[25] Ibid.

or certain cultural features, are encouraged as long as these groups have a need for them and as long as they work to underpin their motives. In this sense, since neither a group's culture nor its cohesiveness is permanent, there are instrumentalists who view the ethnic problem as a transitory phenomenon, i.e., sooner or later traditional particularism will be swept aside by the forces of industrialization and modernization, thus leading to integration within the wider modern society.[26]

Most scholars who have written on the Druzes in Israel have been happy to do so from the primordialist point of view. For them, the "primordial" ties of the Druzes determined their political behavior and social mobilization, and their ability or inability to "integrate" in "modern Israeli society" and to cope with change and "innovation." More often than not, terms such as modernity, integration, innovation, etc., are used without any further definition. Its members bound by their "primordial attachment," the Druze community becomes reified, seen to act and react under the sway of socio-economic and political factors independently from individuals—"the community decides," "concludes," "behaves" or "is influenced by," phrases which abound in such studies, are no longer a mere linguistic convention but serve to either highlight or conceal, if not purposely write out of the historical analysis, those acts or events by which certain individuals or groups have been instrumental in deciding the course of the community.

The present study is an attempt to trace the historical development of the Druze ethnic minority in what in 1948 became the Jewish state. As I hope to show, Druze ethnicity and ethnic issues were and still are instruments in the hands of Israeli government officials as well as interested parties among the Druze elite. And, of course, with an *ethnie* as pronounced as that of the Druzes, there was from the start a ready "core" that could be made use of[27] and a plethora of "givens" in which to embed new "invented traditions." That is, in the controversy between instrumentalists and primordialists I do not think it is necessary, or even helpful, to see the two positions as mutual exclusive. As Uri Ram has put it, "since primordialists concede that the 'past' is a selective and interpre-

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[26] Anthony Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York 1988), pp. 7-13.
[27] Ibid., p. 13.

tative *present* construction, and since modernists concede that the 'present' must make use of available *past* cultural repertoires of the collectivities in question, the gulf between the two is indeed minor."[28] Significantly moreover, what we find in the case of the Druze minority in the Jewish state is that, instead of their cultural "preservation," "core" and "givens" became instruments that both sides, almost at will, reshaped or even re-invented to suit their own political, economic, and—for the Jews—nationalist purposes. Before turning to the protagonists themselves, Chapter One offers a brief sketch of the origins and early history of the Druzes and Druzism.

[28] Cf. Uri Ram, "Zionist Historiography and the Invention of Modern Jewish Nationhood: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur," *History and Memory* 7/1 (1995), p. 93.

CHAPTER ONE

# WHENCE THE DRUZES?

Islam, by the early eleventh century, can be divided in three main streams, Sunni, Shi'i Imami and Shi'i Isma'ili, the issue of division in each case being the question of the rightful successor (*khalīfa, imām*) of the Prophet Muḥammad. From the outset, the Sunnis formed the dominant religious establishment and as such claimed succession (caliphate) for the Umayyi (661-750) and 'Abbasi (750-1258) dynasties that ruled the Muslim domain. Shi'ism arose in the early Umayyi period when a political faction around Muhammad's son-in-law 'Ali claimed succession for him and his descendants. The Shi'a recognizes twelve *imāms* in the line of rightful succession to the Prophet and believe that the twelfth *imām*, Muḥammad ibn Hasan al-'Askar, has gone into "cosmic concealment" (*ghayba*) from where he will return one day as *al-mahdī* ("the rightly or divinely guided one") in order to bring an end to all tyranny and establish true justice throughout the world. This clearly messianic idea was central among a number of concepts Shi'is introduced into the faith from the legacy of other religions that had their cradle in the Middle East.

In much the same way as the Shi'a evolved in reaction to the Sunna, Shi'i Isma'ili precepts and beliefs grew out of the Shi'a Imamiyya, in the second half of the ninth century. Again, disagreement about who were the legitimate *imāms* led to the incorporation of new religious ideas and interpretations that soon set the Isma'ilis apart as an independent sect in Islam. Influenced by Neoplatonic and Indian doctrines, Isma'ilism claimed two layers of meaning for the Qur'ān, one exoteric (*ẓāhir*), the other esoteric (*bāṭin*), the latter acessible only to the initiated, those to whom it was given to perceive the inner meaning of the Qur'ānic verses. Through a vast army of *dā'īs* (missionaries; *da'wa*, mission) Isma'ilism soon reached large parts of the Muslim world. Among the many writers and intellectuals for whom the new doctrine held much attraction were some of the greatest poets in Arabic literature, e.g., al-Mutanabbī (d. 965) and Abū'l 'Alā' al-Ma'arrī (d. 1057). The same went for the group of *Ikhwan al-Ṣafa* ("the Sincere Brethren"), who in the tenth century published a series of fifty-

two "epistles" covering all branches of knowledge and revealing a strong Isma'ili bias.[1]

By the beginning of the tenth century, Isma'ilism became the doctrine of the Faṭimi state. In 969 the Faṭimis had perhaps their finest hour when they conquered Egypt, where they established Cairo as their new capital and erected the Great Mosque of Al-Azhar as the center of the Isma'ili faith. From Egypt they then extended their political and religious sway into Syria and Palestine.

Strongly messianic, the Isma'ili *dāʿīs* kept their followers in expectation of the return of the *imām-khalīfa* as the *mahdī*, in the person of the ruler of the Faṭimi state. When, in 996, after almost a century and five *khalīfas*, al-Ḥakim bi Amr 'Alla ascended the throne, messianic expectations seemed to be reaching their peak, and little more was needed for some Faṭimi Isma'ili *dāʿīs* to claim that al-Ḥākim was of divine nature and the longed-for *mahdī* than his disappearance under mysterious circumstances in 1021. It is here that tradition places the *fons et origo* of the Druze religious sect, *al-Durziyya* (Druzism).[2]

The most radical change Druzism introduced was that it abolished the hereditary system of the *imāma*—after the Divinity had manifested itself in al-Ḥakim, the Isma'ili messianic belief in the coming *mahdī* was replaced by the final triumph of unitarianism.[3] The Druze belief is rooted in the awareness that human beings cannot escape their physical nature and that their comprehension is bound by space and time, and thus no one can ever conceive of the essence of the Deity (*laḥūt*). God can be understood only within the limits of our own comprehension, as happens when, like an image in a mirror, the Deity appears in human form (*nāsūt*). The *nāsūt* is not an incarnation of God but an image through which

[1] On the development of the Isma'ili doctrine and its influence on the Druze doctrine, see Neila Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes, A New Study of Their History, Faith and Society* (Leiden 1984), pp. 15-100; Brayer, "The Origin of the Druze Religion."

[2] Sadik Assaad, *The Reign of al-Hakim Bi Amr Allah, 996-1021, A Political Study* (Beirut 1974), pp. 38-39.

[3] On the development of the Druze doctrine, see de Sacy, *Exposé de la religion des Druzes*; G.S. Hodgson, "Al-Darazi and Hamza in the Origin of the Druze Religion," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 82 (1962), pp. 5-20; G.S. Hodgson, "Duruz," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. (Leiden 1965), vol. 2, pp. 631-637; Brayer, part 1, pp. 47-84, 239-262; part 2, pp. 5-26; Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes*, pp. 59-86; Assaad, pp. 156-181.

He brings Himself closer to human understanding, each manifestation containing a unitarian message.[4] Al-Ḥakim was the penultimate manifestation of the *lāhūt* in the *nāsūt* form, completing the cycle of unitarian messages.[5] Throughout the Epistles (*rasā'l al-ḥikma*) that make up the Druze Canon, there is a strong emphasis on the unitarian concept, warning at the same time against taking the *nāsūt* image for the Deity itself:

> God is unique, eternal, without a beginning, and abiding without end. He is beyond the comprehension of human understanding. Thus, He cannot be defined by words or attributes distinct from His essence. He has no body or spirit.[6]

Following Isma'ilism with its Neoplatonic overtones the Druzes see creation as a series of emanations. God, the Eternal and Self-Subsisting (*al-munfarid bi-dhātihī*), created (*abda'a*) from His Light (*nūrihi ash-sha'sha'ānī*) Universal Intelligence (*al-'aql al-kullī*). From the Light of the *'aql* God created the Universal Soul (*an-nafs al-kulliyya*), then the Word (*al-kalima*), the Precedent (*as-sābiq*), and the Follower (*at-tālī*), five cosmic principles which together form the *ḥudūd* (Spiritual Dignitaries). Between their appearance and the creation of man there was a span of three hundred and forty-three million years. All human souls were created at once, their number fixed for all time. A soul cannot exist outside a human body, which serves as the vestment (*qamīṣ*) of the soul. Upon the death of the body, the soul immediately seeks out a new human "vestment." This transmigration enables the soul to pass through every possible human experience and condition: health and illness, wealth and poverty, etc., and will go on until a Last Judgment, whereupon every soul will be assessed for its deeds and for its adherence to the unitarian concept (*tawḥīd*).[7]

The Druze doctrine follows Isma'ilism in distinguishng between formal revelation and esoteric interpretation, but adds a third element in that more than anything the heart and mind should be applied in the deep devotion to God, not rules and rituals.

[4] Epistles 44, 36, 58, 67; see also Sami Makarem, *Adwa' 'Ala Maslak al-Tawhid* (Beirut 1966), pp. 125-138.

[5] Epistle 12.

[6] Epistle 13; see also Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes*, pp. 111-112; Makarem, Maslak, pp. 90-95.

[7] Brayer, part 1, p. 241; Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes*, pp. 113-117; Makarem, *Maslak*, 109-115; Epistle 58.

Stronger even, always having to rely on intermediaries, followers of neither the formal (*tanzīl*) nor the esoteric (*tā'wīl*) approach will ever arrive at a true belief in God (*tawḥīd*).[8] The true unitarians have no need for intermediaries—neither for praying five times a day, because their prayer should sound at all times and at all places, nor for a fixed time of fasting, because their way or reverence should be a constant fast by partaking of no more than small quantities of food and drink and by renouncing all pleasures of the world.

With its allegorical interpretation of the Qur'ānic verses, the Druze faith considered the seven pillars of Islam as rituals meant only for those who accept literally the outward meanings of the Qur'ānic verses, and as such it abandoned them: each pillar instead was interpreted allegorically as a spiritual experience of the unitarian believer and no longer as an outward practice of rites. For the seven ritual pillars (*da'ā'im taklifiyya*), the Druze faith substituted seven unitarian principles: (1) truthfulness, (2) mutual aid, (3) and (4) renunciation of belief inconsistent with *tawḥīd*, (5) belief that the doctrine of unity was preached in every age, (6) resignation with satisfaction to whatever God does, (7) submission to His will.[9]

It would appear that especially in the discarding attitude Druzism adopted toward ritual obligations and in the overriding principle that God can be reached without intermediaries, through deep devotional application of heart and mind, there was a strong influence of Muslim Sufism. Till today Druze religious sheikhs hold *ṣufī* literature in high regard and greatly revere such *ṣufī* figures as Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (714/7-801) and al-Hallaj (857-922). The impact of Sufism also comes to the fore in the many *ṣufī* principles Druze religious sheikhs adhere to in their overall behavior (*maslak*), i.e., the way they eat, dress and pray and in their attitude toward others. Gnostic traditions reveal themselves in the division that has characterized the Druze community, apparently from the outset, between the "initiated" or "wise" (*'uqqāl*, s. *'aqil*, or *jawid*, s. *ajawid*), who have full access to the Druze Canon (*al-*

[8] This division, of *tawḥīd* on the one hand and *tanzil* and *tā'wīl* on the other, is found in several Epistles of the Druze scriptures.

[9] Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes*, p. 117. To the "five pillars of Islam" the Druzes added the "pillar of *wilaya*" of the Shi'is and the "pillar of the *jihad*" of the Khawaraij.

*ḥikma*), and the "uninitiated" or "ignorant" (*juhhāl*, s. *jāhil*), who receive oral religious instruction but are never allowed access to *al-ḥikma*. Since revealing the mysteries of gnostic truth to outsiders threatens to pervert the faith, some modern Druze writers explain the secrecy and the practice of *taqiyya* as found among the Druzes through this division.[10] For others, *taqiyya* is a mechanism that allows the Druzes to protect the inner faith by adopting the outward appearances of the Sunni ritual, and thus is similar to the *taqiyya* Shi'is, Isma'ilis and 'Alawis developed as an act of prudence when confronted by hostility and persecution on the part of Sunni rulers.[11]

Persecution (*miḥna*, pl. *miḥan*) followed the new sect almost immediately upon the disclosure (*fatḥ*) of its *da'wa* in 1017 and, in 1032, reached them as far as Aleppo and Antioch. The one hundred and eleven Epistles (*rasā'il al-ḥikma*) that form the Druze Canon tell about the early events surrounding the *da'wa* but many historical events remain, of course, shrouded in the mist of the past, all the more since Druze chronicles were written primarily to corroborate theological and religious issues rather than record history. Druze sources dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries relate in gruesome detail how the vicious persecutions of the years 1021-1042 led many of the Druze adherents, who by then had settled also in and around Damascus and Ramla, either to abandon their faith or to flee into the mountains—by seeking refuge and protection in the mountainous regions of Greater Syria and consolidating their faith in secrecy the Druzes were able to survive as a religious minority.

A further element now enters the psychological make-up of the community: *miḥna* becomes the pivot around which Druze popular tradition reconstructed its mythological history. *Miḥna* signifies for the Druzes not only brutal persecution but also an inner experience: the Druzes believe that by *miḥna* their faith is being put to the test. It will be experienced, too, shortly before the Last

[10] Makarem, *Maslak*, pp. 96-97, and Kamal Junblat, "Introduction," in ibid., pp. 7-16.

[11] See, for example, 'Abd Alla Najjar, *Madhhab al-Duruz wal-Tawhid* (Cairo 1965), pp. 8-21. Najla Abu Izzeddin offers a combination of gnostic traditions and the need to seek protection against persecutions for her explanation of *taqiyya*, secrecy vis-à-vis outsiders and the division between *'uqqal* and *juhhal*; see Abu Izzeddin, *The Druzes*, p. 119.

Judgment, when the transmigration of souls reaches its conclusion. Then, reinforced by proof of their courage and belief, the Druzes will put an end to all *miḥan*. Anticipation of the Last Judgment and the final *miḥna* puts the Druzes in a state of perpetual tension: every sign of real danger could be the beginning of the final *miḥna*. The threat of *miḥna* helps the Druzes to override all internal divisions within their community and to achieve full solidarity. It is through *miḥna* that the seven principles or commandments of the Doctrine come to fulfillment, in particular *hifẓ al-ikhwān* commanding all Druzes to guard the safety of their fellow believers.[12]

Once they were concentrated in the most defensible zones of the mountains in Greater Syria, strengthened also by their religious solidarity, the Druzes succeeded in establishing quasi-independent principalities within the wider domain of the Sunni empires. The first of these was that of the Tanūkh dynasty, which ruled the district of al-Gharb near Beirut from 1147 until the sixteenth century, attracting many Druzes from the more vulnerable region of Jabal al-A'lā near Aleppo who soon were settling also in al-Shūf and al-Matn (Mount Lebanon). It is during this period, too, that many locate the coalescence of the Druze community into a distinct ethnic group, with its own particular spiritual and social characteristics. Until today the many guidance books and commentaries written by Tanukhi *amīr*s are held in high regard by the Druzes, al-Amir al-Sayyid Jamal al-Din 'Abdalla al-Tanukhi (1417-1479) being revered almost as highly as the propagators of the faith themselves.

The Tanukh went into decline toward the end of the Mamluk period and were succeeded by the Ma'n, of al-Shuf, who after the Ottoman conquest of the Mamluk Sultanate in 1516 became the paramount clan, fiercely fending off Ottoman efforts to curb Druze independence. In 1593 the Ottomans recognized Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'ni as governor of the Sidon district and five years later also granted him the district of Safad in the Galilee. With the Shuf, now also called Jabal al-Duruz ("the Druze Mountain"), as his power base, Fakhr al-Din controlled parts of Syria, Lebanon and Pales-

[12] On the *miḥna* and its influence on Druze behavior, see K. Firro, "Political Behavior of the Druze as a Minority in the Middle East, a Historical Perspective," *Orient* 27 (1986), pp. 463-479.

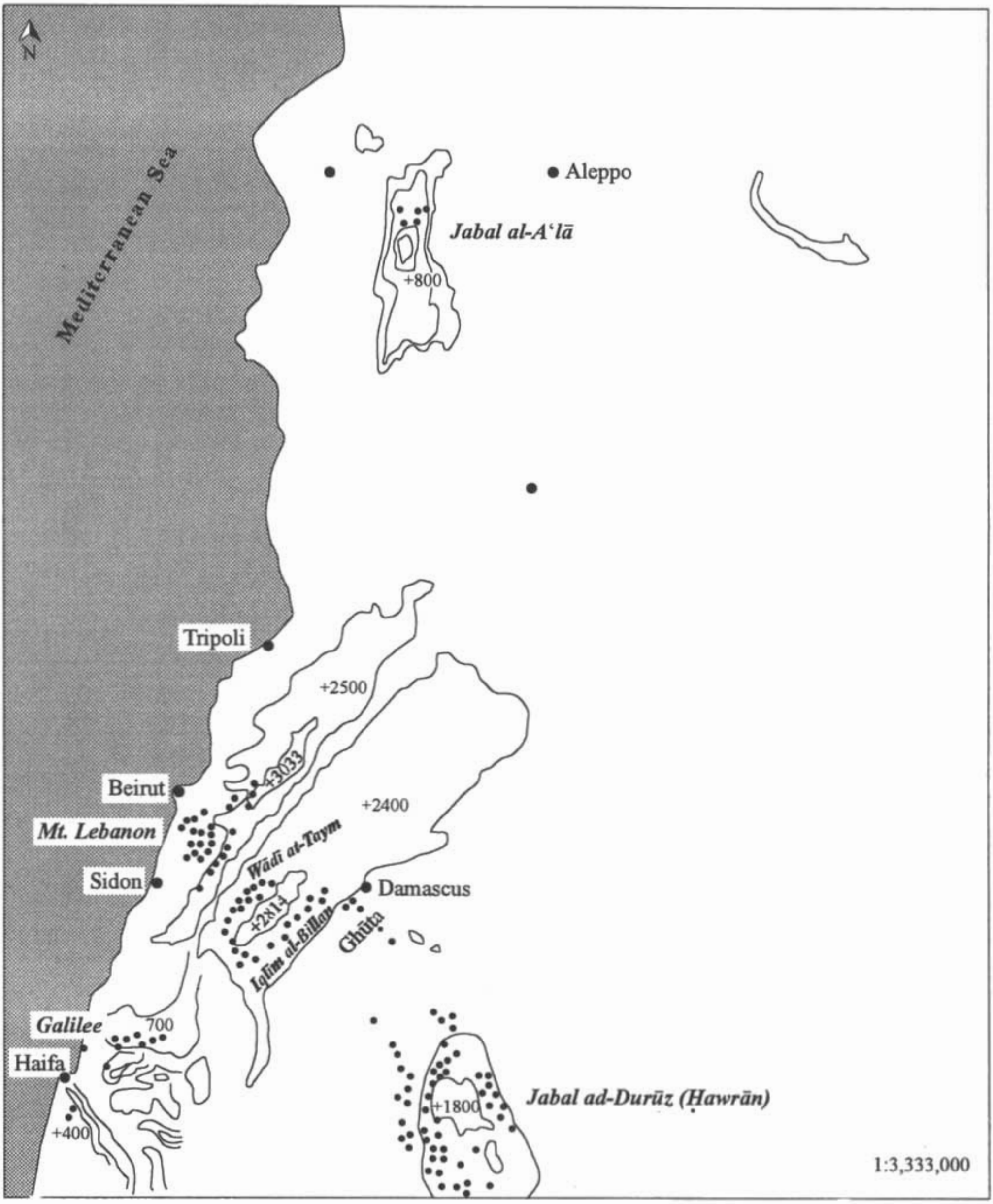
tine where, until his defeat by the Ottomans in 1633, he exercised near complete autonomy; with the relative security this guaranteed, he was able to bring economic prosperity, encouraging the ports of Beirut, Sidon and Acre to develop commercial ties with the West. Because with the fall of Fakhr al-Din it became more vulnerable, the Druze community in Lebanon and Palestine went into political and economic decline, signaling the first beginnings of the move to Ḥawrān in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century.[13] By that time Druzes could be found on the whole in five main regions of settlement:

(1) Jabal al-A'lā, near Aleppo, where today fourteen Druze villages remain from a settlement that, at least until the twelfth century, was one of its most significant centers. In the course of time Druzes from Jabal al-A'lā migrated to the southern parts of Mount Lebanon, the Biqā' and Palestine, where today almost every village has families who can trace their origin to the district of Aleppo (Ḥalab), often named Ḥalabī. Even those who made it to Daliat al-Carmel through the years do not speak the Palestinian dialect but have retained their Aleppo accent till today.

(2) Al-Ghūṭa, a region of orchards surrounding Damascus, where until the seventeenth century Druzes inhabited about ten villages as well as a quarter in Damascus itself. Here, too, there was migration into the mountainous areas for better protection. Today the region counts four Druze villages, and Shami and Ghutani have become familiar names for Druzes in other regions as well (in Israel there is a Shami family in Daliat al-Carmel as well as in Rama, and a Ghutani family in 'Isfiya).

(3) The Galilee, centered around Safad and Acre, where of the thirty-five villages of Fakhr al-Din's time today sixteen remain. Migration from the Galilee to the Ḥawrān and Golan (Jawlān) in southern Syria continued until 1918, people coming from here being called Ṣaffadiyya. From the turn of the eighteenth century they also moved to some of the highest points on Mount Carmel, where Ṣaffadiyya and Shūfaniyya (from al-Shuf), and by the end of the century also Ḥalabiyya Druzes had established at least eight villages. When during the rule of Egypt's Ibrahim Pasha over Greater Syria (1832-1840) six of these were destroyed, their in-

[13] On Tanukhi and Ma'ni rule and the move to Hawran, see Firro, *History*, pp. 25-53.




Map 1.1 The Druze localities in the Middle East

habitants fled to Ḥawran where people also called them Saffadiyya. The two remaining villages on the Carmel are Daliat al-Carmel and ʿIsfiya.

(4) Al-Shuf in Mount Lebanon, and (5) Wadi al-Taym in the Biqaʿ and Iqlim al-Billan at, respectively, the western and eastern foot of the Hermon. Until the end of the seventeenth century these were the two main political and military strongholds of the Druze community in Greater Syria. Subsequent migration into Ḥawran reached its peak in 1860-1866 as a result of French intervention in Lebanon and the implementation of social and political reforms by the Ottomans to which the Druzes refused to subject themselves. Soon replacing Lebanon as "Jabal al-Duruz," Hawran quickly became the main political and military center attracting immigrants from all other Druze locations, while clans such as Atrash and ʿAmer arose to become the leading families of the Druzes in Greater Syria as had the Lebanese families of the Tanukhs, Maʿnis and Junblats in Lebanon.

The feudal system developed by the Tanukhs and the Maʿnis in Lebanon was called *muqāta'jiyya*, a similar system in Ḥawran *mashyakha*. Both were based on sharecropping, whereby landlords would offer the peasant farmers protection against the whims of Ottoman officials, bargaining with them about taxes and conscription on behalf of the general population. Where such bargains failed, as they often did when it came to conscription, revolt was the inevitable outcome. It was this combination of factors—strong migration into Ḥawran, the *mashyakha* system and the string of revolts against the Ottomans—which so strengthened the stratum of leading Druze families that they were able to play a dominant mediating role between their own communities and the central government even into the first years of Syria's independence in 1946.

During the Mandatory period, the French in Syria and Lebanon preferred to deal with the Druzes through these leading families. Thus, in Lebanon, the Junblat, Arslan, Abu Nakad, Talḥuq, Abd al-Malik, ʿImad and other families were largely able to maintain their positions of dominance, as were the Aṭrash, ʿAmer, Abu Fakhr, Hnaydi, Ḥalabi and others in Ḥawran.

The Druzes of Palestine lacked any such social structure centered around leading families, though sheikhs of leading families generally vied for authority over the peasant farmers of the vari-

ous Druze villages in the region. To be successful they had to maintain good relations with the central government or seek legitimacy from the leading families in the Ḥawran and Lebanon. Not seldom families in these peripheral areas relied on the important religious position one of their members occupied in the community, as for example the Ṭarifs, who emerged as one of the leading families in Palestine and who relied and still rely today on the recognition their religious paramountcy was accorded by the Ottomans in the 1880s.

CHAPTER TWO

# PARTICULARISM REVISITED

When, after the First World War, Britain and France set out to consolidate their spheres of influence in the Middle East, they created out of the Arab provinces of the now defunct Ottoman Empire new political entities which they ruled through the mandates they had been given by the League of Nations in 1921—Britain over Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine, France over Syria and Lebanon. For the Druzes, who till then had formed a close-knit community concentrated largely in the mountainous regions of *Bilād al-Shām*, Greater Syria, united by a common religious belief, by shared clan ties and by an often strong leadership elite, this new constellation of powers meant that they were now split into three separate groups, each confronting a different political and socio-economic system and each facing different challenges put in their way by the Mandatory regimes. For the Druzes in Lebanon and Syria, where in such main cities as Beirut and Damascus an emerging new generation of intellectuals had adopted and began to encourage Arab nationalism, this led to a move away from the particularism that through the centuries had been a main characteristic of the Druze *ethnie*.

Overwhelmingly rural, the Druze population in Palestine was not only more peripheral but also more traditional. It continued to cling to the particularist attitude that in the past had stood the community in good stead and retained the religious hierarchy which through the years had secured leadership of its society for a small but distinct group of *ḥamulas*—the Tarifs of the village of Julis, the Mu'addis of Yarka, and the Khayrs of Abu Snan. Of these three it was the Tarifs who, already in the 1880s, were the more influential.

According to oral history, the emergence of the Tarifs as the community's religious authority can be placed at the turn of the nineteenth century and owed much to the good relations they developed with a Druze *sufi*, Sheikh 'Ali al-Faris (b. 1753). Born in Yarka, Sheikh al-Faris used to spend a good deal of his time traveling between villages preaching his moral teachings. In Julis, the village of the Tarifs, Sheikh al-Faris invariably was offered great

hospitality and the house of the Tarifs soon became a religious *majlis* where he could recite his *sufi* poems and give his sermons. Upon his death the religious sheikhs of the Tarif clan continued to make their house available as the *majlis* where the sheikhs of all Druze villages in the Galilee would congregate. The standing of the Tarifs was further enhanced in the 1880s when Sheikh Mhana Tarif rebuilt the shrine of al-Nabi Shu'ayb. Located near the Palestinian village of Hittin, this is one of the more important shrines for both Druzes and Sunnis in Greater Syria—investing in restoring its glory naturally reflected on the Tarifs themselves. When by the end of the decade the Ottomans appointed Sheikh Tarif Muhammad Tarif *qadi* (religious judge) over the Druzes in the *wilaya* (province) of Beirut, the Tarifs' religious status gained official recognition and won them the paramountcy over the Mu'addis of Yarka and the Khayrs of Abu Snan. When he died in 1928, Sheikh Tarif Muhammad Tarif for more than forty years had been the paramount religious chief of the Druze community in Palestine.[1]

By the late nineteenth century, however, Palestine had become the meeting ground for two nationalist movements which during the Mandatory period (1921-1948) were contesting each other with increasing vehemence—one indigenous, Arab/Palestinian, the other immigrant, Jewish/Zionist. As more and more European Jews, fleeing at first economic hardship but, by the early 1930s, increasingly the threat of Nazism, were brought to the shores of Palestine by Jewish nationalism, Zionist land acquisition for settlement purposes led to protest, and soon unrest, on the part of the local Palestinian inhabitants, culminating in the revolt that broke out in 1936. For the Druzes of Palestine, who approached it through their traditional particularism, the Zionist-Palestinian conflict was one between Sunni Muslims and Jews, a religious strife in which they had no part and from which they could stay aloof—whatever the outcome, it would not encroach upon their own status as a separate ethno-religious community.[2]

With the death of Sheikh Tarif Muhammad Tarif in 1928, strife for supremacy erupted anew among the competing leading families. In 1929, Sheikhs Tarif's son, Salman, succeeded in convincing the British Mandatory authorities to appoint him not only to

[1] Cf. Firro, *History*, p. 315.
[2] Ibid., pp. 317-318.

the post of his father, that is as *qadi*, but also as "the head of the Druze community." This formal recognition stung the rivaling Mu'addi and Khayr clans into mobilizing opposition among the Druze villages in the Galilee and along the Carmel in order to have the British restore the status quo ante 1928. Even so, when the British restricted Sheikh Salman's appointment again to "religious matters only," the rival families considered this, still, as formal recognition of the Tarifs' paramountcy which they began to challenge openly—by 1930 the rivalry between the Tarifs and the Khayr was already bearing the features of factionalism and dividing the entire community. One of the leading members of the Khayr family, meanwhile, a young educated person by the name of 'Abdalla, introduced a novel element into the strife by establishing, in 1932, "The Druze Union Society." One of 'Abdalla's main ideas—which he had based on the Supreme Muslim Council and the Zionist organization's Knesset Israel—was that Druze affairs should be conducted through a Druze Council whose members would come from all Druze villages. He furthermore wanted to put the Druze *waqf* under the supervision of the Druze Union Society and have its usufruct benefit the whole community. 'Abdalla's ultimate aim in all this was, of course, to undermine the paramountcy of the Tarifs.[3]

The year 1929 saw hostilities erupt between Palestinians and Jews, sparked off by incidents between Jews and Muslims at the Wailing Wall and the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem, that are generally seen as a turning point in the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. Reinforced in their impression that this was a religious conflict, the Druzes in a letter to the British High Commissioner declared that their position was one of neutrality.[4] It was a position they would maintain throughout the upheavals of the 1930s. The importance of this was not lost on the Zionists, who began encouraging the Palestinian Druze community's particularism so as to ensure they would remain neutral. Furthermore, they intimated that they would be willing to exert their influence with the British Mandatory authorities on behalf of the Druzes. As one Zionist official, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, expressed it at the time after he visited the Druze villages of Rama and Mghar in 1930:

[3] Ibid., pp. 315-319.

[4] SA 550/N-Y/31/36, Letter signed by ninety-six spiritual (*ruhaniyun*) and temporal (*jismaniyun*) leaders to the High Commissioner, 15 November 1930.

> It is important to acquire the friendship of this community ... It is necessary to pay visits to the Druze leaders of Eretz Israel ["the Land of Israel," i.e., Palestine] and to express our readiness to offer them legal help in matters concerning pressure that may be exerted on them by the government or the Muslims and Christians ... After these preparatory moves we should establish relations with their leaders in Hawran, Syria, and the Republic of Lebanon.[5]

In November 1930, following a quarrel that had broken out between Druzes and Jews in the village of Buqay'a, Sheikh Salman Tarif and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi arranged to meet so as to effect a reconciliation between the two communities. Even so, the Tarifs refrained from widening their contacts with the Zionists. Thus, in 1932, Ben-Zvi together with another official, Eliyahu Cohen, met with 'Abdalla Khayr in Jerusalem so as to hear the views of this young Druze activist and discuss with him the attitude of the Druzes vis-à-vis the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. Unsuccessful where relations with the Tarifs were concerned, Ben-Zvi now openly expressed his admiration for the way Khayr's organization would be able to challenge the Tarifs' leadership and "foster among the Druzes a particularist identity."[6]

In order to try to gain "friendly relations" with at least one of the leading families, Cohen went on a week-long trip to the Druze villages of the Galilee. Bypassing Julis, the village of the Tarifs, he spent two days in Abu Snan of the Khayrs, while in Rama and other villages he met with sheikhs who all represented *ḥamula*s belonging to Khayr's faction. One of these was Sheikh Ḥasan Abu Rukun, of 'Isfiya, who after 1936 was to become one of the most active collaborators with the Zionists, responding fully to their desire to establish "friendly relations." By September-October 1932 factionalism had split every Druze village into two camps, each made up of the traditionally competing families. To Cohen it seemed that the Zionists could benefit from the Druze dispute, especially if they encouraged Khayr's faction whose "tendency is to organize [the Druzes] along nationalist lines, separate from the Muslims."[7]

The dispute between the two factions reached its climax in 1933

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[5] CZA S/25/6638, Report of Y. Ben-Zvi, "On Establishing Good Relations with the Druzes," August 1930.

[6] Cf. Firro, *History,* pp. 325-326; quotation from CZA S/25/6638, Report of E. Cohen on "A Meeting with Sheikh 'Abdalla Khayr," 17 April 1932.

[7] CZA S/25/6638, Report of E. Cohen, "Visits among the Druzes," 20 October 1932.

with quarrels erupting in many villages nearly causing bloodshed during the *ziyara* (annual pilgrimage) to *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* in April 1933. Through the mediation of Sheikh Ḥusayn Ḥamada, *sheikh al-'aql* (religious chief) in Lebanon, the following settlement formula was arrived at:

> to retain the established tradition, namely that the spiritual affairs should be administered by two sheikhs together, Yusuf Khayr and Amin Tarif, and that Sheikh Salman Tarif should resign to be replaced by Sheikh Salman Khayr. Since the Mu'addis at present have no suitable religious member they do not wish to participate in the spiritual administration.[8]

While the British authorities were in favor of this formula,[9] Sheikh Amin Tarif refused to accept the proposals as suggested by Sheikh Ḥamada. Having secured the support of the religious authorities in Syria and Lebanon, who were persuaded that 'Abdalla Khayr's organization would "harm" the Druze faith, Sheikh Amin succeeded in maintaining the Tarifs' paramountcy and even to establish himself as the legitimate "spiritual leader of the Druze community in Palestine." Realizing he had been defeated, 'Abdalla Khayr abandoned the political scene, at least until 1948. Unable to produce leaders of the caliber of Sheikh Amin Tarif, the Khayr family lost much of its influence among the Druzes and with it much of its attraction for the Zionists.[10]

With the outbreak of the revolt in 1936, the Zionists were anxious to guarantee that the Druze maintain their neutrality, notably when Druzes from Syria and Lebanon were found to join the Palestinian camp threatening to introduce a shift in the position of the Druzes in Palestine.[11] To that end they turned to leaders from the lower ranking families with whom they had established ties in the early 1930s.[12] In August 1936, the Zionist found two chiefs from

[8] SA 548/N-Y/82/83, report of Sheikh Hussein Hamadeh (Husayn Hamada) 7 December 1934, "Enclosure of Haifa District Commissioner to Chief Secretary," 20 August 1935.

[9] SA 548/N-Y/82/33, District commissioner's offices, Northern District, to Chief Secretary, 20 August 1935.

[10] For further details on 'Abdalla Khayr, see Firro, *History,* pp. 318-320, 325-327.

[11] In July several Druzes from 'Isfiya and Buqay'a villages had joined the Palestinian rebels; cf. Firro, *History,* p. 329

[12] Such as Al-Husayn of Mghar, Farraj of Rama, Faris of Hurfeish and Abu Rukun of 'Isfiya; cf. Firro, *History,* p. 327. Significantly, all these families sup

the Abu Rukun family, Ḥasan and Zayid, willing to go on a mission to convince the Druze leaders in Syria and Lebanon to dissuade anyone from joining the Palestinian side. Through the collaboration of the Abu Rukun chiefs, the Zionists succeeded to reduce Druze participation in the Palestinian uprising of 1936-1939 to a minimum. Ḥasan Abu Rukun, however, paid for this with his life when on 27 November 1938 Palestinian rebels inflicted collective punishment on 'Isfiya, Abu Rukun's village, and murdered him. The Zionists were quick to seize upon the "brutality" of the Palestinian rebels "to stir up public opinion among the Druzes in the Jabal and the Lebanon,"[13] and to put at work an idea they had been contemplating for some time.

### *A Zionist Transfer Plan*

Yusuf al-'Aysami was a Syrian Druze, from the village of Mtān in the Ḥawran, who had accompanied Sultan al-Atrash, the leader of the Syrian Revolt of 1925-1927, when he was sent into exile in Transjordan. In the early 1930s al-'Aysami had paid several visits to relatives of his in Daliat al-Carmel, in Palestine, where he met Abba Ḥushi, then general secretary of the Jewish workers' union in Haifa and one of the main Zionists who were cultivating contacts with Druzes from the Carmel. And it was to al-'Aysami that Abba Ḥushi wrote to inform him of the "brutal behavior" of the Palestinian rebels in 'Isfiya, telling him: "Now is the time to act."[14] A full year before the killing of Sheikh Ḥasan Abu Rukun, Abba Ḥushi's co-strategist, Eliyahu Cohen, had written:

> We are faced with the partition of the country and the establishment of a Jewish state which contains eighteen villages inhabited by ten thousand Druzes. It is possible that relations with the leaders of the Druze people in the [Druze] mountain will enable us to transfer in the future those living among us to the mountain or to another place in Syria.[15]

ported 'Abdalla Khayr's initiative to organize the Druzes against the paramountcy of the Tarifs.

[13] Cf. Firro, *History*, p. 338.

[14] HA 5B/8B, Abba Hushi to al-'Aysami, 27 November 1938. For further details, see Firro, *History*, pp. 333-349.

[15] HA 3A/8B, Report of E. Cohen, 2 November 1937.

It was of this plan that Abba Ḥushi felt the moment had come to start putting it into action. First he sent Zayid Abu-Rukun's brother, Labib, to Hasbaya (in Lebanon) and Jabal al-Duruz (in Syria) to alarm the religious leaders of the community of the "danger which the Druzes of Palestine [were] facing."[16] Meanwhile, al-'Aysami was already writing to Abba Ḥushi how the events of 1938 in 'Isfiya had aroused "the feelings of the populace [in the Druze mountain]" and telling him: "Now we can proceed with our action [the transfer plan]."[17] The attacks of the Palestinian rebels at the end of 1938 were another instance of what Eliahu Cohen already the year before had called the "division in the unity of the [Palestinian] Arabs,"[18] which he, too, saw would give the plan a good chance of success.

When Palestinian rebels killed five Druze peasant farmers in their fields,[19] Abba Ḥushi reacted: "[T]he massacres...have lit the flame of revenge in the hearts of the Druzes and if only someone could exploit this, the outcome would be significant."[20] One month later, on 4 January 1939, one of the religious leaders, Sheikh Ḥasan Khnayfis, of Shafa'amr was killed upon leaving the neighboring Jewish settlement of Yavnael, his death adding oil to the flames. His son, Salih, as part of the revenge he sought, contacted the Zionists through Labib Abu Rukun.

To the Zionists the events seemed to augur well. All they needed now was to establish contact with Sultan al-Atrash. The Zionists wanted Sultan's friendship not only so that he could exercise his influence and stop more Druzes from joining the Palestinian rebels, but also because without Sultan's support the transfer plan stood little chance of success. A continuing stream of Palestinian Druze emissaries kept Sultan informed of the great "danger which threatens" the whole Druze community in Palestine. In August 1938 Abba Ḥushi had paid a first visit to Sultan, together with al-

[16] HA 5B/8B, Report on the activities of the emissary from 'Isfiya (village), Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun, 6 December 1938.

[17] HA 5B/8B, al-'Aysami to Abba Hushi, 5 December 1938.

[18] HA 3A/8B, Report of E. Cohen, 2 November 1937.

[19] For further details on the attacks and the names of the Druzes killed, see Raja Faraj, "Ha-Ksharim ben ha-Druzim ve ha-Yehudim be-Tkufat ha-Mandat ha-Briti, 1918-1948" (Contacts between the Druzes and the Jews during the British Mandate, 1918-1948), unpublished MA thesis, University of Haifa, 1990, pp. 85-86.

[20] HA 7/8B, Report of Abba Ḥushi, 7 December 1938.

'Aysami, ostensibly to greet Sultan upon his return from exile. While he proved to be aware of the Palestinian attacks against the Druzes, Sultan rejected any deal or "friendly agreement" with the Zionists.[21]

In March, al-'Aysami was instructed to prepare another visit by Abba Ḥushi to Sultan. On 17 April al-'Aysami reported back that when he had broached the subject Sultan had "asked me if I knew what the purpose of the visit would be. I answered him that I did not know."[22] In the report he wrote following his visit Abba Ḥushi spoke of the hospitality with which the Druzes had received him and described how al-'Aysami had presented the transfer plan. Sultan's reaction, as given by Abba Ḥushi, suggests that he was aware of the "suffering" of the Druzes as portrayed to him by the Zionist emissaries but he had no idea of the transfer plan. Al-'Aysami had stressed the desire of the Jews to establish good relations with all the people of the Middle East, especially with the Druzes. As to the Druzes in Palestine, he had said: "[They had] greatly suffered...and many of them came here to protest against the great pain. Many of them are, today, thinking of leaving Palestine and coming to Syria."[23] Sultan spoke of the "friendship" and "neutrality" of the Druzes and added that he would pray "that a solution be found for both sides," the Palestinians and the Jews. As for Palestinian Druzes moving to Syria, he referred to the time-honored practice whereby Druzes who had fallen on hard times would seek help from and—either temporarily or for good—would move to live with coreligionists who were better off. In other words, Sultan saw the issue in terms of migration, of which the Druze mountain had seen so many instances throughout its history: "If our brothers [the Druzes of Palestine] want to come here voluntarily and think that it would be to their benefit, we have no objection."[24]

Within three days of Abba Ḥushi's report on his visit to the Druze mountain, a long detailed "Notes" on the Druzes and the transfer plan, written by Eliyahu Epstein and clearly composed long before, were circulated among many Zionists. Meanwhile, prompted by letters sent out by al-'Aysami, many Druzes said they were willing to sell their properties and lands and migrate from Palestine.[25]

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[21] Cf. Firro, *History*, pp. 340-342.
[22] HA 5B/8B, al-'Aysami to Abba Ḥushi, 17 April 1939.
[23] HA 2/8B, Report on the visit to Sultan al-Atrash, 30 April 1939.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Cf. Firro, *History*, p. 244.

In early October six of the Muslims who had been involved in the attacks on the Druzes were sentenced to death by the British authorities. In order to avoid the cycle of further clashes and retaliations likely to follow if the execution were carried out, a committee of reconciliation was formed so as to seek a *sulḥa* (peaceful solution) according to traditional custom in the case of feuds. Such a *sulḥa* also meant that the condemned prisoners would be released after a *diyya* (blood money) had been agreed upon and paid. For the same purpose, a *wafd* (delegation) was formed among the Druze chiefs of Syria to be present at the time of the *sulḥa*. However, for the Zionists reconciliation between the Muslims and the Druzes would put a poke in the wheel of the transfer plan. Through Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis, Abba Ḥushi set out to try to obstruct the work of the reconciliation committee[26] while through al-'Aysami he worked to have the Syrian Druze delegation cancelled, as Abba Ḥushi's secretary, Salim Alfiyya, reported on 17 December 1939:

> In fact, what happened to the Druzes in Palestine—the affair of the Druzes and the Muslims in Shafa'amr—would have been a suitable opportunity to begin the action [of the transfer]. But incapable of dealing with them by force of arms, the Muslims attempted to defeat the Druzes by peace through the influence of their leaders in the Jabal. For this purpose, a delegation of leaders from the Jabal was elected to come to Palestine ... In Damascus I met our friend Yusuf al-'Aysami, who reported that (1) Sultan Pasha and other leaders are pressuring him to make our position known in this whole affair, including the question of the delegation; (2) letters had been sent to Sultan from Izz al-Din al-Halabi and Akram Ubayd [two Druze Arab-nationalists] asking him to send a telegram to the [British] high commissioner in Palestine, via the French high commissioner, asking him to prevent the Druzes of Shafa'amr to sell their lands... Our reply [to al-'Aysami] was to try to delay and, if possible, to cancel the delegation.[27]

Led by 'Abd al-Ghaffar al-Aṭrash, the Druze delegation from Syria arrived in due course and met with the Palestinian committee of reconciliation which was headed by the *mufti* of Safad, Sheikh As'ad Qaddura. On 14 January 1940 the two communities of Shafa'amr agreed on a draft reconciliation, and the *sulḥa* cere-

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[26] For further details, see ibid., pp. 345-347.

[27] HA 5B/8B, Report of Salim Alfiyya on his visits to Syria, 11-15 and 17 December 1939.

mony, held the following day in the presence of the British governor of Haifa and the military commander of the British forces in Palestine and attended by thousands of Druzes and Muslims, put an end to the two years of sectarian conflict between them.[28] For the Zionists, this meant that they had little choice but to shelve their transfer plan, even if only temporarily.

Until the early 1940s Labib Abu Rukun, Salih Khnayfis and Yusuf al-'Aysami continued to collaborate with the Zionists through Abba Ḥushi, whose activities were increasingly directed toward the Ḥawran rather than Palestine. Abba Ḥushi's main aim was to try to move Sultan al-Aṭrash into taking up a favorable position vis-à-vis the Zionists. By presenting themselves as the representatives of Sultan, Abu Rukun, Khnayfis and al-'Aysami sought to legitimize their contacts with the Zionists in the eyes of their own community and to convince Abba Ḥushi and other Zionists that they themselves held important positions within the community. Actually, none of the three was ever a representative of Sultan, let alone had any influence on the position of the Druze community in Palestine. At the time, Khnayfis and Abu Rukun were as yet minor chiefs among Palestine's Druzes who in no way could compete with the leadership position of Sheikh Amin Tarif. And the latter maintained no relations with the Zionists and kept a strictly neutral position vis-à-vis the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.

Until 1940, Abba Ḥushi had been the main Zionist activist to cultivate contacts with the Druzes who for one reason or another were willing to collaborate with the Jews. But by the end of the year other leading figures among the Zionists began to encroach upon Abba Ḥushi's territory.[29] In 1940, with Syria and Lebanon under French Vichy rule, the Zionists were able to coordinate their activities among the Druzes of the Jabal with the British Secret Services, especially when in June the Germans succeeded in recruiting a "pro-German Druze faction" in the Jabal.[30] Al-'Aysami, who had been on Abba Ḥushi's payroll until the end of 1939,

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[28] A photocopy of the original text of the *sulḥa*, signed on 15 January 1940, can be found in the Druze Archives (DA), University of Haifa, file "Relations between Druzes and Arabs."

[29] The main figures were Dov Yosef (formerly Bernard Joseph), Eliahu Sasson and Reuven Shiloah (formerly R. Zaslani). Cf. Laila Parsons, "The Druze in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-1949," unpublished D. Phil. thesis, St Antony's College, Oxford University 1995, pp. 82-85.

[30] Cf. Firro, *History*, pp. 311-312.

found a new source of income in the British. Like the Zionists, who during the 1930s had tried to get the Druzes on their side through Sultan al-Atrash, the British went through great lengths to arrange a meeting between Sultan and one of their generals—equally without success. Abba Ḥushi at the same time complained of "the break in contact with" the Atrash family.[31] When, in July 1941, the British put an end to Vichy rule in Syria, al-'Aysami again found himself out in the cold. Trying to pick up his old contacts with the Zionists through Abba Ḥushi, al-'Aysami learned that not only was the Jewish Agency allocating fewer funds to Abba Ḥushi for his activities among the Druzes, Abba Ḥushi himself now had to present accounts of where the money went. Furthermore, "Druze affairs" had been put under the control of the Jewish Intelligence Service, to which Abba Ḥushi was made accountable for his actions.[32]

Thus it could happen that in 1942 we find Salih Khnayfis and Labib Abu Rukun claiming Abba Ḥushi had withheld and put in his own account money from the Jewish Agency that had been intended for them.[33] Until the end of 1943 officers of the Jewish Intelligence Service, for example, contacted directly with Abu Rukun and Khnayfis. In an effort to regain his former influence Abba Hushi set out with al-'Aysami to try to revive the transfer plan. Abba Ḥushi maintained contact with al-'Aysami by correspondence and through periodic visits of the latter to Haifa while al-'Aysami tried to arrange for a meeting of Abba Ḥushi with Sultan. Abba Ḥushi even approached the Jewish Agency for more money so as to make sure the plan would be successful this time.[34] However, the man in charge at the Jewish Agency, the same Eliyahu Epstein who, in 1938-39, had drawn up the plan of transferring the Palestinian Druzes into the Jabal, was now reluctant to renew the plan and skeptical even of the usefulness of contacts with the Druzes in Syria.[35] Another official, from the Arab section of the Jewish Agency's Political Department, Elias Sasson, ques-

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[31] Cf. Yoav Gelber, "Rishita shel ha-Brit ha-Yehudit ha-Druzit 1930-1948," *Katedra Le-Toldot Eretz Isra'el* (1991), p. 170; see also Parsons, p. 85.

[32] See Parsons, pp. 87-90.

[33] See Shakib Saleh, *Toldot ha-Druzim* (Tel-Aviv 1989), p. 210.

[34] CZA S/25/6638, Abba Hushi to Joseph, 6 February 1944; see also Parsons, p. 87.

[35] CZA S/25/6638, E. Epstein to Joseph, 14 February 1944.

tioned the fruitfulness and efficiency of Abba Ḥushi's contacts with Druzes from the Jabal as well as al-'Aysami's ability to advance Zionist interests among the Druzes there. Sasson was especially doubtful that al-'Aysami had any legitimacy to represent Sultan al-Aṭrash. In June 1945, the transfer plan was finally buried and the salary of al-'Aysami cut off.[36]

### *Beyond Zionist Reach: Sultan al-Aṭrash*

The end of the Second World War in 1945 brought a number of political changes to Syria, Lebanon and Palestine. After the British had ousted Vichy rule, in 1941, the French had declared their intention to grant Syria and Lebanon independence as soon as the war was over. In Lebanon the Zionists had never been able to develop relations with the Druze leadership, that is, neither with the Arslans nor the Junblats, the two main Druze factions there. Led by Shakib Arslan, a well-known Arab-nationalist, the Arslans were involved in political activities against what for them were colonial powers in the region—and thus against the Zionists—even to the extent that Shakib and his brother, Adil, sought a rapprochement with the Germans.[37] Led by Nazira Junblat and (since 1943) her son Kamal, the Junblats were looking for ways to increase the influence of their faction in the internal politics of the country. In 1946, the year of Shakib Arslan's death, Kamal Junblat brought about a change in the traditional Arslani-Junblati factionalism when he adopted Arab nationalism and socialism. This change in ideology came first to the fore when in May 1946 he proposed that the Lebanese constitution be rewritten, which was completed in 1949, the year he established the Socialist-Progressive Party (SPP).[38] There were some abortive attempts to create relations with Druzes in Lebanon but, on the whole, the Zionists refrained from seeking contact with the Druze leadership of Lebanon.[39]

Syria, of course, was different. Sultan al-Aṭrash was still the

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[36] Cf. Parsons, pp. 87-97.

[37] See Hasan al-B'ayni, *Duruz Suria wa Lubnan fi 'ahd al-Intidab al-Faransi* 1920-1943 (Beirut 1933), pp. 306-340. 38.

[38] See Ishti Faris, *Al-Hizb al-Taqadumi al-Ishtiraki*, 3 vols. (Lebanon 1989), vol. 1, pp. 126-161.

[39] See Parsons, pp. 98-100.

paramount leader of the entire Druze community in the Middle East, and as a first step toward integration into Syria prior to independence, Jabal al-Duruz was made part of the central system of Syrian government. At the end of 1943 integration accelerated when the autonomous regulations that had been in place since 1939 were abolished and the Jabal became a province of the state of Syria. Disagreement over the new political status of the Jabal revived the Druze factionalism of the 1930s between "autonomists" and "unionists." That it was largely motivated by political considerations of an internal nature can be seen from the fact that some of the leading chiefs moved form one faction to the other according to shifts in the balance of forces. The unionists represented a new generation of educated Druzes who held high the ideal of the Druze revolt against the French (1925-1927), highlighting its strong Syrian-nationalist dimension.[40]

Except for Sultan and 'Ali al-Atrash, opportunistic shifts from the autonomist to the unionist camp also occurred among the chiefs of the Atrash family. When, in 1943, it was clear that the union with Damascus had become a fait accompli, they all reconciled themselves with Damascus, and inspired by the unionist 'Ali al-Atrash, declared their loyalty to its government: "Our first action will be a serious and productive laboring toward full integration of the Druze Jabal into the Syrian fatherland."[41] The nationalist-unionist faction, mainly comprising chiefs of small and secondary families, and many of the new generation of educated people, set up a coalition which they called *Hai'at al-sha'b al-wataniyya* (Popular Nationalist Organization), or simply *al-Sha'biyya* (Popular Faction). In their first meeting at al-Swayda' on 19-20 April 1944, the organizers insisted on the immediate abolition of the then prevailing administrative system and demanded the full integration of the Jabal in Syria. *Al-Sha'biyya* saw it as one of its primary tasks to deprive the Aṭrash family of the leading role they had traditionally occupied as intermediaries between the Druzes and the government authorities in Damascus. The competition between the two factions intensified during the years 1945-1946 when the Aṭrashes' relations with the Syrian government temporarily deteriorated as some of the sheikhs of the Aṭrash faction went beyond criticizing

[40] See Firro, *History*, pp. 302-313.
[41] The declaration is quoted in full in al-B'ayni, *Duruz Suria wa-Lubnan*, p. 358.

the government in Damascus and lent their support to King 'Abdalla's plan to annex the Jabal to the Kingdom of Jordan (which 'Abdalla saw as a first step in accomplishing his Greater Syria scheme).[42]

Unlike in 1938-39, when the Zionists had supported the separatist faction, the Arab Department in the Jewish Intelligence Service, though it had collected a lot of information on the internal political situation in the Jabal over 1946-1947, decided not to interfere—the internal division was severe enough to keep the Druzes of the Jabal from involving themselves in the Palestinian-Zionist conflict.[43] That the Arab Department was well aware of Sultan al-Atrash's position vis-à-vis the internal politics of the Jabal and of his attitude toward "Palestinian affairs" is clear from their report on a meeting headed by Sultan in November 1946 in the village of Dair al-'Ashāyer whereby a number of sheikhs sought to mobilize support for the Palestinians.[44] Sultan had not joined in when most of the other chiefs of the Aṭrash clan demanded that the Jabal be annexed to Jordan but had remained faithful to his Syrian Arab nationalist position even though a month earlier, when the Syrian government had issued a number of decrees he thought were tyrannical, Sultan had led a campaign against Damascus.[45] Zionists reflect this difference when on the annexation of the Jabal to Jordan they quote Sultan as declaring that he "rejects this idea...and he does not accept to sacrifice the independence of Syria so as to put it at the mercy of the British Mandate... He says the current differences between Syria and Jabal al-Duruz are no cause to sacrifice the independence of Syria."[46] Significantly, when King 'Abdalla fielded his annexation plan the Jabal went through a period of harsh economic distress that was driving many Druzes into migration, especially to Palestine. Three locations were particularly attractive to them: the factories at the Dead Sea where about one hundred families were soon living in a nearby camp;

[42] Ibid. pp. 360-365.

[43] HA 105/195, Reports 27 February 1946, 4 and 6 November, 5 December 1946, 10 March 1947.

[44] Ibid., Report of 6 November 1946.

[45] See al-B'ayni, *Duruz Suria wa Lubnan*, pp. 361-63.

[46] HA 105/195, Report of 5 December 1946. From the same [!] Zionist reports Yoav Gelber concludes that Sultan al-Atrash was conspiring with King 'Abdalla to have the Jabal annexed to Jordan; see Gelber, "Druze and Jews in the War of 1948," *Middle East Studies* 31/2 (April 1995), p. 230.

about three hundred families had made it to three quarters of Jaffa (Sikat-Darwīsh, Abu-Kabīr and al-Ḥanbaliyya) and more than four hundred families (including immigrants from Lebanon) had moved to Haifa and the Druze villages in Palestine. Many of the Syrian Druze migrants found work in the port and in the police force. That they were able to get these jobs was thanks to the Druze chiefs of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel. Sheikh Najib Mansur, *mukhtar* of 'Isfiya, for example, could register seventy migrants as residents of his village thereby facilitating their integration in the police or other work places in Haifa.[47] A number of those who made it into the police force were ex-soldiers of the British-Druze Regiment that had been established in 1941 by Edward Louis Spears, Churchill's chief emissary to Syria and Lebanon. As British soldiers who had fought in the Second World War they now demanded from the headquarters of the British army in Haifa to be enlisted in the police which they saw as their "right." Although most of the migrants left or were driven out of Palestine again in 1948, among those who chose to remain there were some who actively collaborated with the Jewish Intelligence Service and the Hagana.[48]

With the Syrian government manipulating the friction between the Aṭrashes and *al-Sha'biyya*, factionalism resulted in bloody feuds in July 1947 when the elections in the Jabal resulted in victory for the Atrash faction. Through the intervention of leaders from the communities in Lebanon and Palestine, the two factions made up and accepted a compromise that had been worked out by Sultan al-Aṭrash. But the situation soon worsened again when the harvests that year turned out to be especially bad and caused mounting despair among the Druzes of the Jabal.[49] In November clashes between the Druze factions in the Jabal broke out anew,[50] just at the time that the United Nations was discussing a solution for

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[47] Information on the Druze emigrants I was able to collect from the private papers of the Mansur family, which contain letters from these emigrants, lists of those who obtained Palestinian identity cards and correspondence by Sheikh Najib Mansur.

[48] Information collected from the private papers of Khalil al-Qunṭar, who himself was an informant to the Jewish Intelligence Service in 1947-1948. The Hagana was the clandestine pre-State Jewish defense force.

[49] On the internal situation of the Jabal in 1946-1947, see Hasan al-B'ayni, *Sultan al-Atrash* (Al-Suwayda [Syria] 1983), pp. 262-268.

[50] These were sparked off, on 7 November, by attacks the *Sha'biyya* faction launched against the Atrashes in the southern parts of the Jabal.

the conflict in Palestine—the Partition Resolution, which the UN accepted on 29 November 1947, marked the start of the hostilities between Palestinians and Jews. Convinced that the conflict in the Jabal was a result of Syrian governmental manipulation, Sultan is reported as having deplored the government's action in the Jabal at a time when all Syrians, including the Druzes, "should give their support to the Palestinians."[51]

### *Toward the Partition of Palestine*

Thus, by the end of 1946, the Zionists had little to show for their efforts to enlist the support or guarantee the neutrality of the Syrian Druzes. On the other hand, the dire economic situation of the Jabal and the general dissatisfaction of the Druzes with the policy of Damascus proved useful to recruit collaborators among those who had come to Palestine.

Coordination between the Zionists and the British against the Nazis had of course come to an end early in 1945. Zionist-Palestinian relations were deteriorating rapidly when early in 1946 an Anglo-American Committee arrived in Palestine to check up and report on the political future of the country. Under the circumstances both Palestinian and Zionist activists intensified their efforts to make sure the Druzes would not lend their support to the opposite side. In 1945, though the transfer plan had been scuttled, the Zionists continued to use their Druze collaborators in land acquisitions from Druze peasants. For example, in February 1946, Sheikh Muhammad Nimr al-Khatib, the leader of the Muslim Brethren and head of the Arab Committee in Haifa,[52] summoned Druze leaders of the villages around Haifa and demanded they to put an end to the ties Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis maintained with the Jews, showing them pictures of the two together with Zionist activists.[53] In November, following continuing acquisitions by Jews of Druze land in 'Isfiya and Daliat al-

[51] HA 105/195, Report of 10 August 1947; see also B'ayni, *Sultan*, pp. 267-268.

[52] See Baian Nuwayhid al-Hut, *al-Qiadat wal-Mu'assasat al-Siyasisiyya fi-Falastin 1917-1948* (Beirut 1981), p. 626, n. 234.

[53] HA 105/195, "Warning to the Druzes," 26 February 1946.

Carmel he "warned them against further sale of lands to the Jews."[54]

Early in 1946, both Palestinian and Zionist leaders sensed from the mission of the Anglo-American Committee that the British Mandate in Palestine was coming to an end. They were aware that when Britain finally pulled out there would be a renewal of violence between the two sides. As part of their efforts to mobilize diplomatic and military support, the Palestinian leaders looked to the Druzes who, as part of the indigenous Arab population of Palestine, they hoped would join their cause. For the Zionists, who during the year of the Mandate had been able to build up much of the economic and military infrastructure of the state they wanted to establish in Palestine, it was enough if they could persuade the Druzes to maintain their neutrality, though a friendly stance towards the Jews would be welcome. In March, two officials of the Arab Section of the Jewish Agency, Elias Sasson and Ya'acov Shim'oni, met with Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis, and although Shim'oni felt that Abu Rukun and Khnayfis "do not perform services equal to the payment" they were getting from the Agency, the two were asked to disseminate the idea of neutrality or even of friendship towards the Jews among the Druzes and to establish a Druze "association" to that end.[55] Soon after, Abu Rukun and Khnayfis went on a tour of the Druze villages to try to win support for such an association as the head of which they planned to appoint a Lebanese Druze, Tawfiq Abu-Ḥamdan, who had served as vice-commander of Spears' British-Druze Regiment, and who was in touch with the Zionist Intelligence Service.[56]

Both the association and the choice of Abu-Ḥamdan as its pres-

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[54] HA 105/195, information of Na'im Abu 'Ubaida (informant), 24 November 1946. In his biography, Mordecai (Mordekhai) Shakhevitch tells how he went about contacting Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis for the first time and how these two then became his main intermediaries in Zionist land acquisitions; see M. Shakhevitch, *Lifi'ati Mizrah o-Blvav Pnima, Bet Medalia and Shakhevitch* ("The House of Medalia and Shakhevitch") (n.p. [Israel], 1992), pp. 164-165, 220-225.

[55] On the meeting with Abu Rukun and Khnayfis, see CZA S25/6638, Shim'oni to Joseph, 20 March 1946.

[56] HA 105/195, Report of 18 August 1946. Abu Hamdan, after his demobilization, immigrated to Palestine and was granted an estate near 'Atlit, south of Haifa. He later worked for the Israeli Intelligence Services in Beirut, where he died, probably after he had been found out. His estate was transferred to his son who immigrated from his native village of Gharifa, in Lebanon, to Israel in the early 1960s.

ident were intended as a counterbalance to the Druze association Arab-nationalist Lebanese Druzes living in Haifa had established in 1944. Unlike the immigrant Syrian Druzes, who were overwhelmingly *fallāḥīn* fleeing hardship, the Lebanese Druzes who had settled in Haifa most often were merchants and professionals who had been attracted by the business opportunities the budding port city offered them. Although the scope of their political activities was limited, they integrated into the Arab intelligentsia of Haifa, some of them joining the Arab clubs that flourished in the 1940s. Through the initiative of three prominent Lebanese Druze residents, Dr. Yusuf Yaḥyā, Dr. Naif Hamza and Judge Husayn 'Abd al-Samad, a Druze association had been established under the name *Jam'iyat i'anat al-faqir al-Durzi* (The Association of Aiding Poor Druzes) whose membership in 1946 had increased to more than two hundred.[57] The association proved popular with many Palestinian Druzes who contributed money and participated in its meetings. In 1946, following the increase in tension in the country, the association stepped up its activities among the Druzes throughout Palestine. In that same year Palestinian "clubs and associations emerged in every village and city"[58]—the framework the Palestinians were able to use for political and even military mobilization when hostilities broke out in November of the following year.[59]

With the support and guidance of the Lebanese Druze association, young Palestinian Druzes began to establish similar associations. At the initiative of Qasim and Madi Firro, *Nadi al-ukhua al-Durzi* (The Druze Fraternity Club) was established in 'Isfiya, in March 1946, and at the beginning of 1947 there were another two associations in Rama and Buqay'a in the Galilee.[60] Khnayfis and Abu Rukun, meanwhile, failed to establish associations of their own in any of the Druze villages, showing that the leading clans

[57] Information on the Association and its membership I was able to collect from the private papers of the Mansur family (financial reports, copies of applications and correspondence of the Association with Najib and Shakib Mansur).

[58] HA 105/195, Report of 22 March 1946.

[59] Ibid.; the report underlined the activities of the association of al-I'tisam (spiritual communion) headed by Nimr al-Katib, which it describes as the successor of the Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Association that led the Palestinian uprising of 1936. The Lebanese Druze Association is listed as one of the clubs and associations active in Palestine.

[60] Information collected from the private papers of the Mansur family; see also Raja Faraj, *Duruz Falastin fi-Fatrat al-Intidab al-Biritani, 1918-1948* (Daliat al-Carmel 1991), pp. 59-60.

of Tarif, Khayr and Mu'addi were maintaining their stance of neutrality toward the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. However, cracks began to appear when at the beginning of 1946 Jabr Mu'addi set out on a career of his own, seeking recognition as one of his family's main chiefs at a time that the Mu'addi were arguing over who should hold the leadership in their village of Yarka. During a Druze meeting on 17 February 1946, Mu'addi broke with the position of neutrality of the leading families' chiefs,[61] and later in the year joined Salih Khnayfis and Labib Abu Rukun in their efforts to prevent Druzes from joining any of the Palestinian associations and organizations. Early in November Mu'addi and Khanyfis toured the Druze villages to solicit support among the Druze chiefs for the formation of a Palestinian-Druze militia that they wanted to model on either *al-Najada* or *al-Futuwa*.[62] When the thirty Druzes who had met in Haifa for the purpose proved unable to decide which of the two to follow, they appointed Jabr Mu'addi, Salih Khnayfis and Fayz Hassun to study the issue.[63] Significantly, all three had contacts with the Jewish Agency, and may well have been the organizers of the idea itself. At the beginning of December Mu'addi and Khnayfis again toured the Druze villages to promote the establishment of such a militia. In an attempt to lend some legitimacy to his actions, Mu'addi claimed that he represented Amir Majid Arslan, who was then defence minister in the Lebanese government. But "the Druzes did not respond to the appeal since these people [Mu'addi and Khnayfis] were suspected of collaborating with the Jews."[64]

With general tension increasing throughout 1947, Abu Rukun and Khnayfis continued their contacts with and activities for the Zionists. When Palestinian leaders who suspected them of being involved in land deals with the Jews invited them to attend a meeting

[61] HA 105/195, Report on the meeting on Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi of Yarka, 19 February 1946.

[62] *Al-Najada* and *al-Futuwa* were two youth organizations or militias. The former was established in December 1945 by supporters of Hajj Amin al-Husayni. It was headed by the lawyer Muhammad Nimr al-Hawari, who managed to remain in the country after 1948. The latter was established early in 1946 as a rival organization to *al-Najada* by supporters of Jamal al-Husayni, the leader of the Arab Party. For further information, see al-Hut, pp. 508-514.

[63] HA 105/195, Reports of 20 and 24 November 1946 on the Druze meeting in Haifa of 15 November 1946. Fayz Hassun served in the British Intelligence Services and during the war had ties with the Zionists.

[64] Ibid., Report of 5 December 1946.

of the Muslim High Council in Haifa to discuss the matter, Abu Rukun and Khnayfis in an effort to arouse the sympathy and communal feelings of the Druze leaders in Syria, subsequently alleged that they had been threatened by the Muslim Council. Collective punishments against the Druzes were stepped up and villagers were increasingly attacked in their fields, reminiscent of the events that in the late 1930s had led to sectarian conflict between Palestine's Sunni-Muslims and Druzes.[65] According to Gelber: "The *Shai* [Jewish Intelligence Service] watched these quarrels, counting on utilizing them eventually for driving a wedge between the rival villages and expanding it to the entire community."[66] These events took place during the months that the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was working out its recommendations for a solution to the conflict in Palestine.

On 29 November 1947 the General Assembly of the UN accepted Resolution 181 and voted in favor of the partition of Palestine into an Arab and a Jewish state following British withdrawal from the country. Far from solving the question of Palestine in a peaceful manner, Resolution 181 led to immediate hostilities between the country's Palestinian and Jewish populations which turned into a full-blown military conflict with the outbreak of the war in May 1948 between Israel and the region's Arab countries.

As in the 1930s Palestine's Druze peasant farmers remained aloof from the conflict which they continued to see as a conflict between Jews and Sunni-Muslims in which, as a Druze minority, they had no interest to be involved in. That they *did* so was, of course, because unlike their brethren in Syria and Lebanon, the Druzes of Palestine, taking pride in their particularism, were wary of nationalist ideologies and had never adopted nationalist sentiments. That they thought they could *afford* to do so, now that they were actually within the fangs of two competing—albeit vastly unequal—nationalist movements, was to have far-reaching repercussions: 1948 put paid to the notion that by adhering to their traditional form of ethno-religious particularism they could safeguard the independent status of their community, whereas the "equality" they were eventually offered in the Jewish state was to prove hollow.

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[65] Ibid., Reports of February 1947, 30 April, 16 July 1947.

[66] Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 231.

In order to keep track of the position of the Druze leaders in Syria and Lebanon, the Arab Section of the Jewish Agency had recruited a Sunni-Muslim agent, Judge Aḥmad al-Khalil, from Haifa. In August he had already reported back that the internal situation in the Jabal and Lebanon occupied the Druze leaders in their political activities almost exclusively.[67] Still, the Zionists decided to step up their activities among the Syrian and Lebanese Druzes to forestall any Palestinian recruitment drive. Prompted by the events in Jabal al-Duruz, Lebanon, and the hostilities in Palestine, Palestinian Druze leaders began visiting the Jabal and Lebanon in order not only to assist in working out a reconciliation between the Druze clans there but also to consult with the Lebanese and Syrian Druzes on the position the Druze community ought to take up in Palestine. Palestinian pressure on the Druzes must certainly have increased when, in July, the exiled *mufti* of Jerusalem and (since 1936) head of the Arab Higher Committee, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, chose as his temporary domicile the Lebanese Druze village of Qrnāil. Among the Palestinian Druze leaders participating in the reconciliation efforts in the Jabal and Lebanon was Sheikh Najib Mansur, *mukhtar* of 'Isfiya. In the course of his three-week visit Mansur met with Hajj Amin and other Palestinian Muslim leaders in early November who all "exerted great pressure upon him, demanding he make a declaration and promise concerning Druze collaboration [with the Palestinian side]." When meeting Druze leaders in Syria and Lebanon, however, Mansur stressed that the Druze community did "not face any threat from" the Jewish side.[68] As one of the most prominent leaders who had helped maintain the neutrality of the Druzes since 1930, Mansur, as much as the community's paramount leader, Sheikh Amin Tarif, attempted to persuade the Druze leaders in Syria and Lebanon to exert their influence with the Palestinian Druzes. The argument in favor of persisting in the attitude of neutrality they had adopted

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[67] HA 105/195, Report on "the Druze rivalries," 9 August 1947. In his report al-Khalil writes that the Syrian government created the hostilities between the Atrashes and the *Sha'biyya* through 'Adil Arslan. According to the same report the factionalism among the Lebanese Druzes intensified after the death of *Sheikh al-'aql* Husayn Hamadi. The report also accuses 'Adil Arslan of being behind the rivalries between the Druze clans in Lebanon over the succession of *sheikh al-'aql*. On the report, see also Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 231.

[68] HA 105/195, Report, "Pressure on the Druzes," 11 November 1947. The report considers Mansur to be an influential figure, in effect the leader of the Druze community in Palestine.

since 1930s was that the Druze community in Palestine was too small and too poor to survive any involvement in the conflict.[69]

In December sixteen Arabs from Tira, a village south of Haifa, were killed by a bomb explosion. Following the attack pressure on the Druzes of ʻIsfiya and Daliat al-Carmel to join in reprisal attacks against the Jews intensified. According to a Zionist intelligence report of 21 December, two Druze chiefs, Ḥusayn Hassun and Qāsim Ḥalabi, were active recruiting Druzes for the "Palestinian cause." Pressure was also mounting on Druzes of Daliat al-Carmel working in Jewish companies and businesses to quit their jobs.[70] On 9 December, Salim al-Atrash, on a visit to Palestine, wrote to Najib Mansur as *mukhtar* of ʻIsfiya that in Jaffa a "united Druze Arab association to recruit Druzes" for the "Palestinian cause" had been set up.[71] According to Mansur, he himself succeeded in holding back seventy-five young ʻIsfiya Druzes from joining up.[72]

That the attempts to sway the Druzes from their neutral position failed had much to do also with rumors doing the rounds in the Druze villages that Sultan al-Atrash had cautioned the Palestinian Druzes to stay neutral in the conflict.[73] In the middle of December, Kamal Asʻad Kanj, a member of the Syrian Parliament, toured the Druze villages in the Carmel and Galilee, claiming that he acted on instructions from Sultan al-Aṭrash to call upon the Druzes not to take sides.[74] Kamal was the son of Asʻad Kanj who had been involved on the Palestinian side in the conflict in the 1930s but, in 1940, had worked with the British and the Jews against the rule of Vichy in Syria. In December 1947 Kamal himself met with the Arab Section's representative in Haifa, Tuvia Arazi,[75] and one assumes that the subject was part of the discussions between the two, but it may also very well be that Kamal expressed the general feeling of the Druze community in Palestine whose leaders were wary anyway not to become involved in the conflict. In

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[69] Private papers of the Mansur family.

[70] HA 105/23, Report of the situation among the Druzes, 21 December 1947.

[71] Private papers of the Mansur family, Salim al-Atrash to Najib Mansur, 9 December 1947.

[72] HA 105/195, Report on "The Druzes and the Disturbances," 17 December 1947.

[73] Ibid., Report on "The Druzes and the Disturbances," 21 December 1947, based on information collected by ʻAbdalla Abbud from Daliat al-Carmel.

[74] Ibid., Reports of 18 and 25 December 1947.

[75] For further information on the contacts between the Kanjs and the Zionists, see Gelber, "Rashita," pp. 168-169; idem, "Druze and Jews," p. 232; see also Parsons, pp. 80-86.

an article he published in the Lebanese newspaper *al-Dunya*, on 12 January 1948, Kamal Kanj wrote:

> I have visited the Palestinian Druzes whose number amounts to 17,000 souls. From among them it would be possible to establish a force of 4,000-4,500 fighters, who are today in lack of weapons. I made great efforts to obtain weapons for them, but until now without success.... What I observed in Palestine is a lack of organization and a limited number of arms on the part of the Arabs.[76]

Kamal was later reported as having organized two hundred and fifty Druzes from Syria to join the Palestinians in their struggle.

### *Druzes of Syria and Lebanon Make a Last Stand*

In September 1947, the Political Committee of the Arab League met at Saufar in Lebanon to consolidate its position on "the Palestinian question." One of their agents, pretending to be a journalist, covered the meeting for the Zionists. The Committee decided to form an Arab Liberation Army (ALA) and selected a veteran of the Syrian Revolt, Fawzi al-Qawiqji, as its commander. The agent further reported that the Arab delegates to the meeting did not expect to receive assistance from the Arab countries except for Syria. Thus, Qawiqji began a tour in Syria to recruit volunteers.[77] On 18 December 1947, Qawiqji arrived in Jabal al-Duruz, calling on the Druzes to help "fight in the war of the whole Arab nation." A week earlier, Sultan al-Atrash and representatives of *al-Sha'biyya* had sent a message to the Druzes of the Jabal in which they expressed their solidarity with the Palestinians and their willingness to participate in the "struggle" against the Zionists.[78] Upon his arrival to the Jabal, Qawiqji met Sultan in his village, al-Qraya, urging him to agree to a Druze battalion being recruited for the ALA. According to Sheikh Muhammad Abu Shaqra, who was to be *sheikh al-'aql* in Lebanon during 1957-1990, Qawiqji wanted to recruit five hundred Druze volunteers, half of whom would bring their own weapons, while Sultan "hoped to recruit the maximum possible number of volunteers in order to assure the victory." Qawiqji had to admit that for lack of funds he could recruit no

[76] In Hebrew translation found in HA 105/195, Report of 15 January 1948.
[77] HA 105/352, Report of 22 September 1947.
[78] S. Sghayar, *Banu Ma'ruf fi al-Tarikh* (al-Qraya [Lebanon] 1984), p. 678.

more than five hundred men. With the blessing of Sultan, the veteran Shakib Wahhab was appointed as commander of *Fauj jabal al-'Arab* (the battalion of the Arab Mountain).[79]

Wahhab was a Lebanese Druze. Born in 1888, he had fought in the Druze Revolt against the French in 1925-27, and in 1936 had led a group of thirty Druzes to join the Palestinians in their uprising. In 1941 he served as captain in the Druze Regiment the British had organized. The Druze battalion comprised four units all bearing names of famous battles in the Druze revolt—al-Mazra'a, al-Musayfira, al-Kafr, al-Faluj—whose officers were Abu-al-Khayr Radwan, Wakid 'Amer, Naif 'Azzam, and Naif Hamad, respectively. Owing to a shortage of weapons and lack of money, the volunteers were divided into two categories: those who had come with their own arms were paid 60 Syrian pounds (S£) per month, while those who had no weapons received only 35 S£.[80] While Shakib Wahhab was organizing his force, Druzes from Syria and Lebanon formed their own group of fighters or, as individuals, joined other Palestinian groups. For example, in January 1948 a group of Druzes from Jabal under Naif Huzayfa joined the force of *al-Jihad al-muqadas* whose commander was 'Abd al-Qadir al-Ḥusayni; both men died in the battle of al-Qastal in April 1948.[81]

It seems that until the beginning of March 1948 the Jewish Intelligence Service and the Arab Section of the Jewish Agency lacked all information on the movements of the Syrian and Lebanese Druze volunteers coming to Palestine. Reports on the Druze groups in late March give the impression that besides Wahhab's battalion there were at least two other groups from Syria and Lebanon ready to join in the fighting: Nihād Arslan, brother of Majīd, defence minister of Lebanon, with more than four hundred Druzes, and Kamal Kanj, the Druze delegate to the Syrian parliament, with two hundred and fifty Druzes.[82] Where Wahhab's battalion was heading was unknown to the Zionists—Druze informants appear not to have squealed on their coreligionists' movements. They thus turned to Sunni-Muslim informants, such as 'Abd al-Hamīd Burq

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[79] al-B'ayni, *Sultan*, pp. 301-302. As of 1937, the Druzes of Syria gradually began calling Jabal al-Duruz Jabal al-Arab.

[80] Sghayar, p. 679; Parsons, p. 121; Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 233.

[81] On Huzayfa and his group, see Gh. Abu Muslih, *Ad Duruz fi Zil al-Ihtilal al-Israili* (Beirut 1975), p. 53. On 'Abd al-Qadir and his force and its relation with the ALA, see Al-Hut pp. 614-616.

[82] HA 105/195, Reports of 25, 29 and 30 March 1948.

and Abu Nasr, who were able to confirm that Wahhab's men had arrived in Shafa'amr on 29 and 30 March.[83]

Although the Druzes of Shafa'amr received the Druze battalion with great hospitality, they were aware that its presence could draw them and other Druze villagers into a conflict of which since 1930 they had wanted no part. Zionist reports of early April show that the Druzes of the Carmel and Shafa'amr were preoccupied by two main eventualities. The first concerned the lack of weapons with which to defend themselves in case of attacks on their villages. In a meeting with Jews of Haifa area, Druzes from 'Isfiya, led by their *mukhtar*, Najib Mansur, told the Jews that they could not be expected to resist Arab fighters who might enter their villages since they simply did not have the weapons to do so. As to Wahhab's battalion, they stated: "If Druzes come, how could we fight them and not receive them!" However, to placate the Jews and to prevent themselves from getting implicated, the Druzes of 'Isfiya suggested that it might be a solution to try to bribe Shakib Wahhab.[84]

Their second preoccupation was even more significant. Quartering the Druze battalion in Shafa'amr meant that if fighting broke out, this would be in an area where the Druzes had most of their fields, i.e., around Kurdani, and for the Carmel villages in the plain of Marj ibn 'Amer (the Valley of Yizrael). Both the Druzes of Shafa'amr and the Carmel were apprehensive that when hostilities erupted between the Druze battalion and the Jews, the latter would then prevent them from collecting their harvest. That the Druzes were going through a period of economic hardship was well known to the Jews, whose informants had reported on wheat shortage especially in the Carmel region.[85]

Still, although the Druzes of Palestine in general were keen on maintaining their neutrality and some of their chiefs may have tried to persuade Wahhab to avoid hostilities with the Jews, small

[83] Ibid., two reports of 1 April 1948 on the arrival of Wahhab's battalion to Shafa'amr.

[84] HA 105/195, Reports of 1 and 4 April 1948; see also Parsons, pp. 122-123. According to Parsons, the suggestion to bribe Wahhab came from the Jewish side.

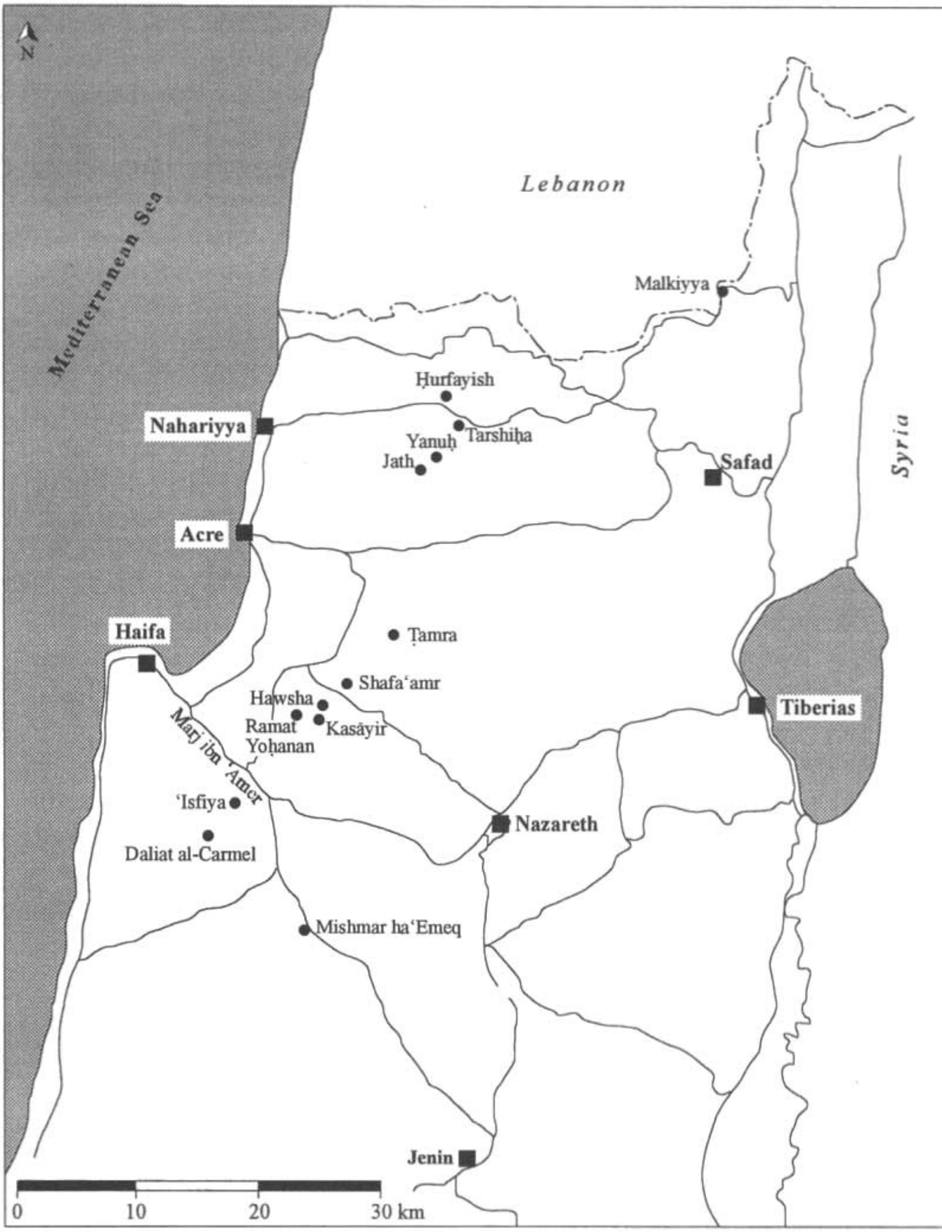
[85] Ibid., Report of 4 April 1948: "Their economic situation is extremely hard, especially the problem of the wheat supplies." Till today, villagers of 'Isfiya remember the meetings that went on in the house of the *mukhtar* and in other places on how to deal with the shortage of wheat.

groups from 'Isfiya, Yarka, and other villages decided to join Wahhab's battalion, or the battalion of Yarmuk led by Adib al-Shishakli in central Galilee,[86] or organized themselves on an individual basis. The first two weeks since its arrival in Shafa'amr the Druze battalion spent scouting the area which it was expected to hold, while Shakib Wahhab conducted patrols around Jewish settlements and visited Arab villages in the Galilee. In his first report to the ALA headquarters in Damascus, dated 6 April, he commented on the lack of sufficient weapons for his men and for the Arab villagers, asking for supplies to be able to meet "the enemy who has heavy and new weapons."[87]

Zionist reports made up in May, as well as Israeli historiography, stress that Wahhab first engaged in battle when Qawiqji asked for his help on 6 April after his attack on Mishmar Ha'emeq, on the road between Jenin and Haifa, had been repelled. However, it would appear that hostilities between the Druze battalion and Jewish forces actually erupted only on 12 April when Wahhab moved into the two villages of Husha and Kasayer, near the Jewish settlement of Ramat Yohanan. The battle of Ramat Yohanan lasted five days. According to Zionist reports, hostilities began when on the morning of 12 April, the Druze battalion opened fire on Jewish workers of Ramat Yohanan, while Druze sources have it that a Jewish field guard was the first to open fire on a Druze patrol. On the evening of 13 April, the officers of the Carmeli brigade decided to "take the initiative from the enemy" by attacking the positions the Druzes had taken up north of Ramat Yohanan. Their first attack was repelled, whereby twelve Jewish officers and soldiers were killed. The Jews were clearly taken by surprise: "The brigade for the first time had come upon an enemy whose ability was much superior to the Arab fighter and which had inflicted defeat upon it. The

[86] For further information, see Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, p. 88. For example, a group of "nationalists" organized themselves on 7 April, comprising young people belonging to the small families, among them Ni'man Badr Azmi, Sulayman al-Halabi, Hassan and Naif Sa'd az-Zahir, Abd al-Karim 'Atshi, Ali al-Ali, Husayn As'ad Hamdan and Yusuf 'Azzam; cf. HA 105/195, Report of 7 April 1948. Adib al-Shishakli was a Syrian officer who commanded one of the eight battalions of ALA. Following a coup d'état at the end of 1949, he ruled Syria until 1954.

[87] IDFA 957/52/13, Report, "*Ha-Druzim ba-Milhemet Eretz Israel*" (The Druzes in the Eretz Israel [= Palestine] War), 1 August 1948. Wahhab's reports to Damascus were captured in Malkiyya in the north where Wahhab retreated from Shafa'amr in July. On his capture, see SM FM 2565/8, Y. Palmon's report, "Our Activities among the Druzes," 5 August 1948.




Map 2.1. Northern Palestine, 1948

spirits of the brigade were low and faith in its own ability had been undermined."[88]

Highly unusual too is the fact that none of the Jewish battle reports over April and May contain as much as a hint of this first battle between Wahhab's Druze battalion and the Zionist forces operating in the north of Palestine. Even a long report, dated 1 August, on the Druzes in the war and most of the Israeli literature written after the establishment of Israel contain no reference to this first encounter. Two days later, on 16 April, the Carmeli brigade attacked the Druze positions in Husha and Kasayer early at dawn when most of the Druze fighters were not there yet—for logistical reasons they returned each night to the battalion's headquarters in Shafa'amr. Having quickly overpowered the small Druze night guard in Husha and Kasayer, the Jewish forces took control of these positions from which the Druzes had been able to snipe at Ramat Yohanan. That the Druze put up no defense of Husha and Kasayer has led Palestinian historian 'Arif al-'Arif to suspect that there had been a prearranged deal between Wahhab and the Hagana,[89] but the immediate fierce counterattacks of the Druze battalion and the large number of casualties they suffered remove any such suspicion. In their attempt to re-take Husha and Kasayer but with inferior equipment, the fighting was reduced to hand-to-hand combat whereby the Druzes "charged with knives between their teeth."[90] According to Jewish sources between 110 to 130 Druzes were killed and about 100 were wounded, while on the Jewish side 25 were killed and 42 were wounded. 'Arif al-'Arif puts the number of casualties at no more than 30 killed, while Sa'id Sghayer, a Druze historian, mentions by name 86 soldiers who fell in the battle.[91]

The failure of the Druze counterattack in Husha and Kasayer

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[88] On the battle of Ramat Yohanan, see Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, p. 91; David Koren, *Kesher Ne'eman ha-Hagana ve-Hadruzim* (Tel-Aviv 1991), pp. 54-56; Shakib Saleh, *Toldot ha-Druzim* (Ramat Gan 1989), p. 213; Parsons, pp. 127-134; the quotations are from Moshe Carmel (commander of the Carmeli brigade), *Ma'arakhot Tzafon* ('En Harod 1949), p. 63; see also Parsons, p. 129.

[89] 'Arif al-'Arif, *Al-Nakba Nakbat Bayt al-Maqdis*, 3 vols. (Beirut 1956), vol. 2, p. 224; see also Parsons, p. 131.

[90] Carmel, *Ma'arakhot*, p. 65; Tzadok Eshel, *Hativat 'Karmeli' be-Milhemet ha-Komimut* (Tel-Aviv 1973), p. 116; Parsons, pp. 131-132.

[91] HA 105/195, Report of 2 May 1948; another report, of 5 May 1948, lists 36 killed and about 60 injured; see also Parsons, p. 132; 'Arif al-'Arif, vol. 2, p. 225; Sghayer, p. 683.

and the heavy casualties dealt a severe blow to the fighting spirit of the Druze battalion, officers and soldiers alike. Their utter frustration is reflected in Sakib Wahhab's communications to ALA headquarters in Damascus. From his defeat on 16 April until 7 May, Wahhab kept calling for reinforcements insisting he needed more weapons, soldiers, logistical means, and money to pay his men when desertions began threatening the dissolution of the entire battalion. On the day after his defeat Wahhab wrote to Damascus:

> Our position in the area has worsened because of the great number of wounded on our side, the hospitals of Acre and Nazareth are full [of wounded] and the number of men killed is tremendous. Thus we are reduced to guarding our headquarters in Shafa'amr. I have already written about the delay of salary's pay, the lack of heavy cannons, that we are running short of ammunition, and that our situation meets with incomprehension ... what do you expect from me, and how can we fight? Is it possible to liberate the Arab countries in this manner and with such weapons? .... Why can you not come to appreciate the technical efficiency and lethal weapons of the enemy? We should be liberating the [Palestinian] people from its merciless enemy, but, if—God forbid—the enemy succeeds, no Arab will remain anywhere [in Palestine].[92]

On 18 April the town of Tiberias fell to the forces of the Hagana and four days later Haifa. These events, following so quickly upon the defeat of the Druze battalion together with the fact that no reinforcements were arriving from the ALA, had a devastating impact on the Druze soldiers and officers of the battalion. During the last two weeks of April, two hundred and twelve Druze soldiers deserted and went back to Syria and Lebanon; on 27 April forty soldiers sold their weapons to Palestinians in the village of Tamra.[93] Deepening their mood of desperation was that due to the "Arab lack of preparation for the war," they had seen many of their colleagues killed without receiving a proper burial or injured without being given medical care. They also learned of the defeats of the Palestinians at the Qastal and Mishmar Ha'emeq, and saw how the fall of Tiberias and Haifa had created a flow of tens of thousands of Palestinian refugees. Under these circumstances, Jewish Intelligence Service officers had their job cut out for them

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[92] IDFA 957/52/13, Report, "The Druzes in the Palestine War," 1 August 1948.
[93] HA 105/95, Report of 2 May 1948.

when they set out to persuade more soldiers to desert from the Druze battalion.

### *The Pro-Israeli Druze Faction Comes into Its Own*

Following the defeat of the Druze battalion, the Jewish Intelligence Service, through its Druze collaborators, launched a campaign to convince the Druzes to stay within their villages and that, while Jewish military successes were driving increasing numbers of Palestinians from their homes, no harm would come to the Druze villagers. At the same time, intelligence officers used their Druze collaborators to act on two levels in order to neutralize armed Druze resistance. First, they convinced those Syrian and Lebanese officers and soldiers who had remained in Shafa'amr to return to their own countries, and, second, they created a special unit to be made up of Druze volunteers that was to join the forces which upon the establishment of the Jewish state in May 1948 would be reorganized as the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

Immediately after the defeat in Ramat Yohanan, Khalil Ibrahim al-Quntār, a Druze immigrant from Jabal al-Druze, was sent to Shafa'amr by one of the Jewish Intelligence officers, Giora Zayd, and his Druze collaborators, Labib Abu Rukun and Jad'an Hani 'Amasha, to try to talk officers of the Druze battalion into meeting with representatives of the Jewish Intelligence Services.[94] According to Khalil al-Quntar's accounts of his mission, as early as three days after the defeat in Ramat Yohahan he was able to convince four officers and four soldiers to meet with Giora Zayd. After a first meeting with Zayd in Husha the eight Druzes met, on 20 April, in the Jewish settlement of Kiryat 'Amal with Moshe Dayan (then chief commander of the IDF, later to become minister of defense and one of Israel's prominent leaders). It was Dayan who suggested to turn the Druze defectors of Wahhab's battalion into a volunteer unit that would join the Israeli forces, with each a salary of 27 P£. Another meeting took place the following day between Giora Zayd, Labib Abu Rukun, Jad'ān 'Amasha, Khalil al-Quntār, and the Druze officers and soldiers of the battalion Isma'il Qabalan, Naif al-Quntār, Nimr al-'Aridi, Sa'id al-Quntar, and Salman

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[94] See Saleh, *Toldot ha-Druzim*, pp. 212-213.

Radwan, in the house of Nasib al-'Aridi in Shafa'amr. They then proceeded to Kiryat 'Amal where a sum of money was distributed among the Druze officers and soldiers.[95]

Apart from Labib Abu Rukun, all Druzes involved in this deal with the Jews had originally come from Jabal al-Duruz. Jad'an 'Amasha had migrated in the 1930s to Palestine, worked as agent for the British until the Second World War and thereafter became an agent for the Jewish Intelligence Service. Khalil al-Quntār had come from the Jabal early in the 1940s and had established himself first in Jaffa and then in Haifa. As he himself relates in his private papers, he was recruited by Labib Abu Rukun to the Jewish Intelligence Service.[96] Isma'il Qabalān had belonged to the British Druze Regiment, then became an officer in the Druze battalion. According to him, the decision of the group to contact the Jews was motivated by the sense of utter frustration engendered by the battle of Ramat Yohanan:

> The headquarters of the ALA in Damascus left us without weapons, food and medicine. The local population in the Galilee did not see us as force of liberation (*'inqaz*). Instead of getting assistance from the villagers, rumors were spread by them that our soldiers were raping women in Shafa'amr and other villages. The battle of Ramat Yohanan proved to many of us that the liberation of Palestine was no more than an empty slogan. When we found ourselves without hope, our dead comrades lying in the fields unburied and our injured men suffering while in Shafa'amr and Nazareth people continued to spread rumors, we decided to help our Druze brothers from becoming refugees.[97]

It seems that until 7 May Wahhab was left in the dark about the negotiations between the Jewish Intelligence Service and a number of his officers—as Khalil al-Quntār put it: "We succeeded ... Wahhab has no idea that his battalion no longer belongs to him."[98] However, at the beginning of May the Druze battalion had been reduced to no more than one hundred and ninety frustrated and

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[95] Khalil al-Quntār's private papers were made accessible to me by Nazih Khayr, a relative of al-Quntār. For a somewhat different account, see David Koren, who interviewed Isma'il Qabalan in 1988, *Kesher Ne'eman*, p. 59-60. One of the participants in these discussions and meetings was Shakhevitch; for his version on Ramat Yohanan and the contacts with the Druze soldiers, see Shakhevitch, pp. 271-276.

[96] Khalil al-Quntar Private Papers.

[97] Author's interview with Isma'il Qabalān on 16 September 1995.

[98] Khalil al-Quntār Private Papers.

desperate soldiers. The hopeless situation of the battalion is reflected in reports Wahhab sent to Damascus on 3 and 7 May, describing the low morale of the Palestinians of the Galilee and the lack of assistance and cooperation the small number of his battalion received: "We cannot maintain this situation unless you send reinforcement." His letter on 7 May was probably the last attempt to solicit the help of the ALA command in Damascus, accusing it of intentional shirking:

> Following my letter on 3 May 1948, I was very astonished that you paid no attention to my letter... I am beginning to think that your lack of response shows an absence of interest [and is] based on some prior intention on your part. ... It is true that I am sending unpolished letters to you but headquarters surely should forgive me for this because there are compelling reasons why this is so:
> 1 The desertion of our soldiers and the declining morale among them.
> 2 The overcrowding of population due to the large number of refugees from Haifa and its surroundings.
> 3 The lack of cooperation on the part of the [local] population.
> 4 The shortage of ammunition and heavy guns.
> 5 Our requests that have remained unfulfilled.
> ... We are desperate! What are we to do? It is impossible to continue this way.[99]

Between 20 April and 7 May Wahhab appears also to have sent emissaries to the ALA headquarters in Damascus to convince them to send weapons and other aid to his defeated battalion. One of these was a Lebanese officer, Amīn al-A'war, probably accompanied by Jabr Mu'addi of Yarka. According to al-A'war's son 'Umar, when the pair left the ALA headquarters without any result, al-A'war offered Mu'addi his personal gun with the words: "This is all I can offer to my coreligionists, my own gun." Mu'addi is alleged to have responded: "I am going to make a deal with the Jews so as to prevent further danger from coming to my community."[100] As in other battalions of the ALA, the recruits of Wahhab's battalion fell into two categories: those who had joined up for economic reasons, and were easily to be tempted by the Jews to de-

[99] IDFA 957/52/13, Report, "The Druzes in the Palestine War," 1 August 1948; see also Saleh, *Toldot ha-Druzim*, p. 213.

[100] Personal communication, Dr. Umar al-A'war. Though he maintained ties with the Zionists since 1946, Mu'addi was very active in internal Druze affairs without consulting the Zionists.

fect and join their volunteer unit, and those who had been inspired by nationalist sentiments and who left Palestine after the battle full of disappointment and frustration.[101]

Meanwhile the Druze villagers in 'Isfiya, Daliat al-Carmel, Shafa'amr, Yarka and Julis became worried that the military presence of the Druze battalion so close to their fields could endanger their crops, and they put pressure on Wahhab to come to a deal with the Jews whereby they at least would be able to bring in their harvest.[102]

Wahhab subsequently met a senior officer of the Jewish Intelligence Service, Yehoshua (Josh) Palmon, on 9 May, in Shafa'amr in the house of Salih Khnayfis. In a report on "our activities among the Druzes," dated 5 August, Palmon summarized the agreement he made with Wahhab: "(1) Refraining from giving help [to Arab forces in the area]; (2) persuading [them] of the efficacy of Jewish arms; (3) introducing distrust toward the Arab arms and ammunitions of the Arab countries; (4) and toward their leaders."[103] The agreement also comprises some reciprocal elements: "The two sides agreed not to attack each other," and Wahhab "can control the Western Galilee" so as to create "an independent Druze enclave" since according to the UN's Partition Resolution the area was part of the territories allotted to the Palestinian state. Wahhab and Mu'addi toured the Western Galilee in order to have the local population petition the ALA to let Acre, the principal town of the area, come under the Druze battalion.[104] But within five days Wahhab found himself already empty-handed: on 14 May

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[101] Druzes from the Galilee had joined the battalion after its arrival in Shafa'amr, some motivated by group solidarity, others by nationalist consideration. One of the Palestinian Druzes who participated in Ramat Yohanan's battle was Salman Shihadi, of Rama, who was injured and lost one eye. On the disappointment of the Druzes, see Raja Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, p. 92.

[102] There are several accounts of how Wahhab was persuaded to meet the Jews. From the Israeli documents (IDFA 957/52/3, Report of 1 August 1946) one gets the impression that Wahhab thought he was going to arrange a cease fire agreement, something which would not damage his reputation in a time of despair. Generally when deals are accompanied with bribes, documents will say so. In the case of Wahhab there is no sign that this deal cost the Zionists money. On the contrary: Wahhab welcomed the deal in order to be able to leave Shafa'amr before his battalion completely dissolved.

[103] SA FM/25565/8, Report of Palmon, "Our Activities among the Druzes," 5 August 1948; the same report on HA 105/195.

[104] IDFA 957/52/3, Report of 1 August 1948.

Jewish forces launched an attack toward Nahariyya, near the Lebanese border, taking Acre in their stride.[105]

On 15 May, the date on which the British Mandate for Palestine came officially to an end, the Jews declared their independence in that part of Palestine they had succeeded in occupying by then and established the State of Israel. The result was immediate war between the new state and the region's Arab countries. With the fifty men who were all that remained from his battalion Wahhab withdrew on 22 May to Malkiyya, on the Lebanese border, where they then dispersed. While on both the Jewish and the Druze side the role which the Druze battalion played in the fate of the Western Galilee, is usually exaggerated, its retreat from Shafa'amr and then from Malkiyya meant for the Druze *fallāḥīn* that they stood no longer in danger of losing their crops. When the UN imposed a truce in June, the Israeli forces permitted the Druze peasants to harvest their wheat crops: "During the first truce the local Druzes asked ... for supplies and for the possibility to harvest their crops... their request was granted and the fact that from all the fields of the Jewish area [of Palestine] only the Druze crops were harvested, pushed them to Jewish side."[106]

Setting fire to fields and attacking the Palestinian *fallāḥīn* that worked them had been part of the Jewish tactics during the preceding months of hostilities, responsible in part for the beginning of the refugee problem. By May, when the summer crops were ripening in the fields, this "battle for the harvest" reached its climax. Zionist settlements organized the harvesting of tens of thousands of dunams that Palestinians had been forced to abandon, distributing the crops among their own people. On 13 June the Israeli chief of staff, General Yigal Yadin, issued an order prohibiting Arabs who were still in the areas conquered by the IDF to reap their fields.[107] On 19 June, the first day of the truce, he added: "Every enemy field in the area under our complete control we must harvest. Every field we are unable to reap, must be destroyed. In any event,

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[105] Ibid. According to the report, "when the population of Acre asked Wahhab for assistance, he replied—on Jewish advice—that with his light weapons he could not face the tanks and the guns of the Jews."

[106] IDFA 957/52/13, Report, "The Druze in the Palestine War," 1 August 1948.

[107] Cf. Benny Morris, *1948 and After, Israel and the Palestinians* (Oxford 1990), pp. 173-182 ("The Harvest of 1948 and the Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem").

the Arabs must be prevented from reaping these fields."[108] The Israelis turned this policy into a weapon of economic warfare to win over Palestinians who had remained in their villages by that date. Experts at the Israeli Foreign Ministry described the case of the Druzes as follows: "In many parts of the country the matter of collecting the harvest served as an important card in our hands. It certainly meant something that the Druzes in the north of the country were allowed to reap their crops while their neighboring villages were barred from doing so and are now wandering around hungry."[109]

When Israeli-Arab hostilities resumed for what became known as the "ten days war" (9 to 19 July), the first test of the "loyalty" of the Druzes, who were busy reaping their fields, came with the battle of Shafa'amr, which was among the first Israeli objectives. With Salih Khnayfis serving as their go-between, representatives from the Israeli forces and from the Druze elders of Shafa'amr met for secret negotiations to consider the IDF's takeover of the town. The Druzes at this stage of the war no longer doubted that the Jews would come out on top and thus were bent on safeguarding their crops; the Israeli representatives were out to secure minimum casualties. Following an advance warning of the impending attack by the IDF, Salih Quntār, the Druze militia leader, vanished from the town.[110] That the fall to the Jews of Shafa'amr occurred in coordination with the town's local Druze inhabitants—and not only with those who had had ties with the Jewish Intelligence Service—signaled a critical turning point in Jewish-Druze relations.

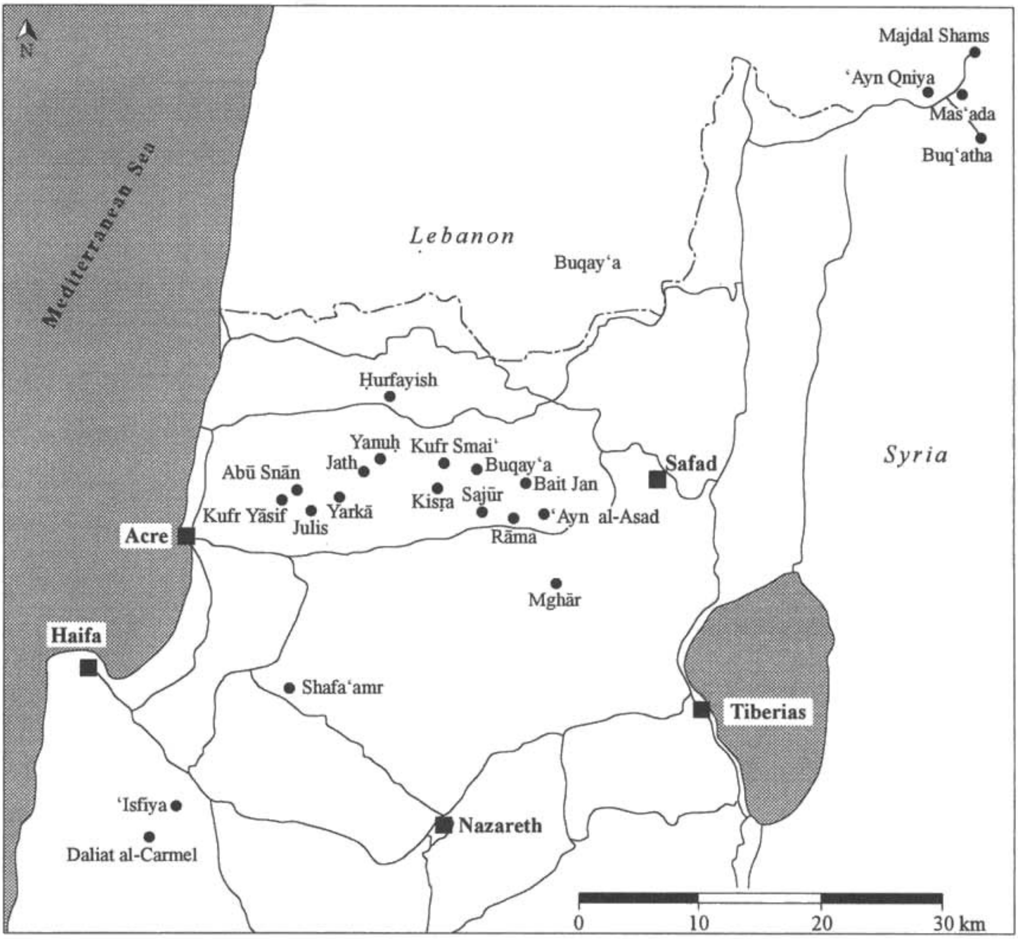
### "*A Knife in the Back of Arab Unity*"

By mid-July three of the eighteen Druze villages in the Galilee were under full Israeli control—'Isfiya, Daliat al Carmel and Shafa'amr. From then until November the Jewish Intelligence Service was very

[108] Ibid., p. 182. 109.

[109] Ibid., p. 187.

[110] On the battle of Shafa'amr and the negotiation between the Druzes and the Jews, see Parsons, pp. 148-160; Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 236; SA FM/2565/8, Palmon report of 5 August 1948. Salih al-Quntār was a relative of Khalil al-Quntār who was sent by the Zionist Intelligence Service to make contact with officers from the Druze battalion. Salih was the commander of the 45 Druzes who served in Qawiqjī's forces. After the fall of Shafa'amr he defected to the Israeli side and became one of the officers of the Minority Unit in the Israeli army.




Map 2.2 Druze villages in Israel and the Golan Heights

active in bringing all Druzes in line with those of the Carmel and Shafa'amr. The most important step the Israeli authorities took in that direction was the creation of a "minorities unit" in the Israeli army. During the harvest season Giora Zayd and Labib Abu Rukun went around trying to recruit young Druze volunteers from 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel promising the villagers in return free access to their fields in Marj ibn 'Amer and the recruits good salaries. Although at first there were reservations on the part of the Mansur, Hassun and Halabi leaders, the elders of the two villages decided not to interfere in the issue, assuming it might help to safeguard the position of their community under the new rule, especially when an all-out victory for Israel was apparent. From an undated list containing the names of seventy volunteers, it seems that while some of them belonged to the Abu Rukun, Mansur, Hassun and Halabi families, most of them came from poor economic backgrounds. The total number of the people dependent on these volunteers was given as 211.[111]

To this body of irregulars the Israelis then added the ex-officers and soldiers they had earlier collected upon their defection from the ALA and the Syrian army, and the Muslim Bedouin and Circassians who had joined IDF in May. By early 1949 the "Minorities Unit" had grown to a number of 850 officers and other ranks—400 Druzes, 200 Bedouin, 100 Circassians, with 150 Jewish officers and professionals. The salaries of the Druzes, Bedouin and Circassians came from a special fund put together from sales of captured smuggled goods. Among the Druze group, Syrian Druzes who had defected from the ALA and the Syrian army numbered eighty. The first commander of the Unit, Tuvia Lishansky, acknowledged that there had been a deliberate policy to try to recruit as many Syrian Druze deserters as possible so as to undermine the trust of the Arab countries in the Druzes.[112] Significantly, as stated in his letter of appointment (issued by the chief of staff), Lishansky was to be in constant touch with "the political section of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department."[113] And it was an

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[111] SA C/1318/20, undated "List of the Druze recruited and the number of souls supported by them." The list comprises 70 volunteers. About 40 of them were recruited in August and September (author's interview with Fawzi Saba, July 1995).

[112] See Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 240.

[113] SA FM7249/49/219, 24 August 1948.

official of the Middle East Department, Ya'acov Shim'oni, who revealed that the true objective of establishing the Minorities Unit and encouraging Druzes to defect from the Syrian army had been to use the Druzes as "the sharp blade of a knife to stab in the back of Arab unity."[114] By July this same Shim'oni was very active in setting up a number of sections in the Department headed by experts on the Arab countries, an Arabic newspaper and an Arabic broadcasting section.[115] Through these channels the Israeli propaganda machinery was then quick to use the fact that the Jewish state had been successful in establishing a "Minorities Unit" within the Israeli army for purposes of psychological warfare, radio broadcasts in Arabic praising it as a symbol of "intercommunal fraternity" which they alleged was in sharp contrast to the "friction between Muslims and minorities in the Arab states."[116]

This use of the Minorities Unit by Israel for propaganda purposes had a far-reaching effect on the Druze community within the state in that it pushed with their backs to the wall those Druzes still adhering to the neutrality they had declared in 1930. Even those who supported the Palestinians had no alternative but to hide for the time being their true sentiments. In other words, by now the entire Druze community had been drawn into the conflict, whether it wanted to or not. The impact the Israeli action had on the relationship of the Druzes with the new state of Israel neatly summarized by Palmon: "Of course this act has destroyed all ways of going back [for them]."[117] That it would also introduce changes in the position of the Druzes in Syria and Lebanon vis-à-vis their coreligionists in Israel was perhaps even more severe. This was certainly an outcome welcomed by the director of the Jewish National Fund in Haifa and the director of "Villages Section" in the Ministry of Minorities, Mordekhai Shakhevitch:

> We are "flirting" with this community and until now we have succeeded nicely. Not in every activity of this kind can we forecast that this community will continue to collaborate with us until the end. Probably some of those who are connected with us may slip to the side, but

[114] SA FM 2570/11, Shim'oni to E. Sasson, 16 August 1948; see also Parson, p. 191.

[115] Ibid., Shim'oni to Sasson, 19 August 1948.

[116] IDFA 957/52/13, Report, "The Druzes in the Palestine War," 1 August 1948; see also Gelber, " Druze and Jews," p. 241.

[117] SA FM 2565/8, and HA 105/95, Report of Palmon, "Our Activities among the Druzes," 5 August 1948.

> if we think about it deeply and consider the position of those on the other side of the border [Syria and Lebanon], and the location of their villages within the [current border] lines, then it must be clear to us how to exploit at least the [existing] possibility.[118]

Still, Israeli decision makers during these years were very much aware that the entire Druze community in the Middle East had always formed one single entity that shared the same political attitude and consulted permanently between themselves on the political situation:

> We should see the Druze community in Israel as an integral part of the whole community in the Middle East whose number is about 250,000 souls. Until now there are close relations between the Druze communities in Syria, Lebanon and Israel. Frequently common meetings are held between them, especially between the religious chiefs, in order to deal with essential problems concerning the whole community, including taking up a common position vis-à-vis new forces acting in the political arena.[119]

Encouraged by Druze adventurers who crossed the front line in the north and came up with—mostly fabricated—suggestions on how the Israelis could best arrive at cooperation between themselves and the Druzes of Syria, the Middle East Department in the Foreign Ministry began toying with the idea of destabilizing the internal political situation in Syria through the Druzes. In the early hours of 21 May, Hammud Safadi, from Majdal Shams in the Golan Heights, managed to enter one of the Jewish settlements in the north of the country accompanied by someone who had commercial ties with the Jews. Safadi suggested that he could be of service to the Jews because he knew how to weaken the position of the Kanj's clan which, he claimed, was collaborating with Qawiqji.[120] On 30 June, Farhan Sha'lan, from 'Ayn Qinya, and Muhammad Safadi,

[118] SA FM C/1318/20, Shakhevitch to Ministry of Minorities Affairs (MMA), 17 October 1948. Officially Shakhevitch was an employee of the Jewish National Fund, but, as many employees of this institution at that time, he was active not only in the acquisition of lands but also in collecting information on the Arab side, i.e., his Arab land brokers were also his informants in political and military affairs; see Shakhevitch, pp. 162-170.

[119] Ibid., SA FM C/1318/20, Tuvia Cohen (liaison officer for Muslim and Druze affairs in the northern district) to the Ministry of Religions, 10 August 1948.

[120] HA 105/31, Shapira Dori report on "Different Information," 24 August 1948. Hamud Safadi belonged to Safadi family, the rival of the Kanj (also called Abu Salih) family. The two factions competed with each other throughout the Golan, which the Druzes call Iqlim al-Bilan. At the end of the war he lived in Israel.

from Majdal Shams, met with two Jewish officers, Immanuel Friedman and Shapira Dori. The two Druzes agreed to recruit Druze officers in the Syrian army and to distribute "circulars in Arabic... throughout Syria" in an effort to counteract tales of Israeli atrocities.[121]

Like other Druzes before them who collaborated with the Jews, these Druzes from the Golan were keen to present themselves as privy to the thoughts of Sultan al-Aṭrash. They claimed that Sultan had told them "that it is agreeable to him that they have relations with the Jews and he is ready to allow any request, and that they must strengthen these relations." Furthermore, Sultan "has contacts with 'Abdalla and has no relations with the Syrian government."[122] On 9 February 1948, Anis Ḥatum, a young Druze from the Jabal, had made it into Palestine for a first time and introduced himself as an envoy of a Druze association called *Jam'at ittihad al-shabab* (United Youth Association) which, he claimed, was an oppositional organization headed by Sultan. Although the Jewish Intelligence Service did not take his stories seriously, Giora Zayd kept in touch with him and facilitated his visit to relatives in Daliat al-Carmel.[123]

On 31 August, Anis Ḥatum, this time together with Mhana Ḥatum and Faris al-Duayr, crossed the front-line in the north and met in Haifa with the two officials who were then the most active among the Druzes, Shakhevitch and Amnon Yanai, and later with someone from the Political Department by the name of Zvi Mekler. The Middle East Department, represented by Ezra Danin, Shim'oni, Mekler and Yanai, then arranged a meeting in Tel Aviv with the Druze "delegation of the Jabal." Speaking on behalf of his colleagues, Mhana claimed that "they had been sent by Sultan and Yusuf al-Atrash, in order to prepare the way for an agreement between the Druzes and Israel concerning a coup d'etat in Syria" with military and financial assistance which Israel would provide:

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[121] Ibid., Dori report on "Meeting with Druzes," 2 July 1948; SA FM 2565/8, Political Department to Shim'oni, 8 July 1948; see also Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 243.

[122] HA 205/31, Dori report, 29 July 1948; see also Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 243, who takes the information of the Syrian Druzes at face value.

[123] HA 195/105, 16 February 1948. For further information on Ḥatum, see Parsons, pp. 117-118. According to his relatives in Daliat al-Carmel, it seems that Ḥatum was looking for work in Palestine. After he married a Jewish woman, there was little or no contact between him and his family (author's interview).

> In Mhana's speech there were a number of things that seemed to us extremely confused, which raised our suspicions and led us to reservation and caution He informed us that Druzes in their preparation for the insurrection had contacted the French representatives the year before through their emissary, Salmān Hamza, who had met with French diplomats in Ammān.[124]

But the Druzes became flustered when "we told them that we are going to verify this story through our delegate in Paris." The Israelis became even more suspicious when the Druzes mentioned several oppositional groups in Syria with which they coordinated: "We could not imagine that such an old hand at rebellion as Sultan al-Aṭrash would reveal his secret plans to such a large group of men." The Druzes suggested "a detailed program" and demanded 80m. S£ plus military equipment in order to recruit one thousand rebels. Shim'oni concluded: "We have no complete certainty that the people with whom we had spoken were sent by Sultan. Even if they turn out to be impostors or adventurers, we told them nothing that could cause [our side] any harm."[125]

That these Middle East Department representatives were so patient with these Druze adventurers may partly have been because Palmon in mid-August had sent Labib Abu Rukun to Syria on a special mission "to find Sultan al-Atrash and to persuade him—not in our name but in the name of the Druzes in Israel—to establish contact with us and to prepare practical common programs." But Abu Rukun failed to meet with Sultan because he claimed he had been followed by the Syrians and had to give up. However, in Beirut he had been able to meet Sultan's brother Zayid, to whom he suggested that he try to find out from his brother what stance the Druze leader was taking and to prepare plans for action.[126] Although it is even uncertain that Abu Rukun actually met Zayid, for Shim'oni it was urgent to contact Sultan:

> We have been thinking a lot about [the issue]... we think that connections with possible rebellious forces in Syria headed, of course, by the Druzes, could create a lot of damage, stabbing a poisoned knife in the back of the Arab unity which remains intent on fighting us.[127]

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[124] SA FM 2565/8, Report of Shim'oni, "Operation with the Druzes," 15 September 1948.

[125] Ibid., see also Parsons, pp. 175-177; Gelber, "Druze and Jews," pp. 244-245.

[126] SA FM 2565/8.

[127] SA FM 2570/11, Shim'oni to Sasson, 16 September 1948; see also Parsons, p. 180.

Aware that Sultan was not exactly the man to agree to using the Druzes as a "poisoned knife," Shim'oni thought of gaining Sultan's attention via the "Druze interest" as represented by Abu Rukun:

> We decided to instruct Labib, in the case that one of the Atrashes would arrive in Beirut carrying news [on Sultan's position], to try to emphasize again that it is not the state of Israel that demands assistance or cooperation from the Druzes, but [that it is] he, as representative of the Druzes in the country [who is coming] to convince his brothers in the mountain that such cooperation is required from the Druze point of view.[128]

While Shim'oni was busy trying to counter the reservations Israel's more realistically inclined Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, had voiced about using the Druzes as instrument in order to destabilize Syrian internal politics, and while the Israelis were left speculating on the position Sultan occupied vis-à-vis the Syrian government, King 'Abdalla and the new state of Israel, a delegation arrived in the Jabal from Lebanon to work out a reconciliation between the two rival factions in the Sha'biyya-Aṭrash dispute, a matter that was to occupy all Druze leaders in the Jabal from 7 July until the end of September.[129]

Under the circumstances, neither Sultan nor, probably, his brother, Zayid, would have been able to find the time to meet Abu Rukun. When Abu Rukun was sent again, possibly on 17 September, he "got stuck in Hasbayya afraid to continue because he is suspected and they are after him."[130]

Sultan al-Aṭrash's position vis-à-vis the war in Palestine may be gleaned from an interview he gave to the Syrian paper, *al-Nasr*, on 1 September 1948. Criticizing the Arab politicians, Aṭrash said:

> we have our stomachs full of declarations and speeches which serve no purpose at all. Each day the Arab leaders are issuing declarations but so far I have not seen any results.... The [Palestinian] problem concerns every Arab, it does not need speeches, but to thrust the sword in the face of the enemy who is a threat to all Arab countries.

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[128] SA FM 2565/89, Report of Shim'oni, 15 September 1948.

[129] SA FM 2570/11, Shim'oni to Sasson, 6 September 1948, HA 105/95, Report of 27 September 1948. The delegation was headed by Sheikh Ali Muzhir, *qadi* of the Druze *madhhab* court, and counted among its members such leaders as Arif al-Nakadi.

[130] SA FM 2570/11, Shim'oni to Sasson, 19 September 1949. Because Shim'oni had reported on 16 September that Abu Rukun had arrived from Lebanon, I assume that Abu Rukun was sent again soon after with new instructions.

Defending Wahhab and the Druzes who had fought in Palestine, he said:

> Druzes do not know what cowardice is or treason, it is in their nature to rise up against oppressors.... I have written to the Druze leaders [in Palestine] calling them to stand firm beside their brethren in the country and to fight with their usual courage. I told them that I was greatly displeased to find them described as indifferent vis-à-vis the enemy.[131]

Summing up, we may say that Druze collaborators—from al-'Aysami in the early 1930s, to Ḥatum in 1948—in the way they invoked Sultan's name in their dealings with the Zionists, led many Jewish "experts" up the garden path when it came to the position of the Druzes in Syria. Before anything else, the Syrian Druzes had to make sure they were seen to be above all suspicion in their loyalty to Syria, especially after the existence of a Druze Unit in the Israeli army had come into the open.

### *A Pattern Emerges*

While the Israeli campaign to recruit Druzes for the Minorities Unit intensified during the first truce in the fighting (19 June-9 July), there were rumors that Qawiqji was trying to recruit Druzes to the ALA from that part of the Galilee that had not yet fallen to the Jews. Meanwhile, Jordan's King 'Abdalla sent one of the Druzes who served in the Jordanian forces to persuade Druzes from the Western Galilee to form their own counterpart to the Israeli Minorities Unit to fight alongside the Arabs. In order to prevent this from happening, Abu Rukun hastened to convince Sheikh Salman Khayr that such an act would "result in the complete destruction of the Druze villages."[132] As of June, the Israelis spent quite some effort contacting the leading families in the Western Gali-

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[131] Ibid., Hebrew translation of the interview with Sultan in *al-Nasr*, the Middle East Department, 1 October 1948. Despite many attempts to locate letters by Sultan in the private papers of the Druze leaders, I have been unable to come up with any. Gelber assumes that the interview with Sultan took place in the beginning of 1948, but since Sultan refers to the internal dispute in the Jabal and the position of the Druze in Palestine it is more likely that the interview was given in August.

[132] HA 105/95, Report of 29 June 1948, and "Information from the North," 11 July 1948.

lee with whom they wanted to come to an agreement in order to prevent Qawiqji's men from entering the Druze villages. Apart from Jabr Mu'addi, the leading sheikhs of these families were at first cautious but, as the end of the truce approached and the renewal of the fighting between the IDF and the ALA became imminent, they realized they needed to start looking for ways to safeguard their livelihood and their villages. Two weeks into the fighting, Palmon could summarize the situation in the Galilee as follows:

> Through Sheikh Jabr [Mu'addi], the relations with this area are close. From time to time, meetings are held in order to strengthen the friendship. Sometimes notables from the mountain come, recently the religious Sheikh Salman Tarif did so ... Intimidating the Druzes, Fawzi [Qawiqji] executed some Muslim traitors... Today, frictions and clashes could easily break out between Druzes and Qawiqji's men. We can give assistance in ammunitions and soldiers. We can stir things up with a few thousand Lire.[133]

By the end of July, Muslim refugees from Acre and the surrounding area were crowding into the village of Yarka; shortage of food and water soon forced them to continue their flight.[134]

Accompanied by one of his refugee guests, Sheikh Rabah al-'Wad, Marzuq Mu'addi, son of Sheikh Sa'id who until his recent death had been one of the most prominent leaders of the community, met on 28 July with a local security officer, Haim Auerbach, so as to come to an agreement with the Jewish forces. By doing so, Marzuq may have been seeking to consolidate the leading role for his branch in the Mu'addi family which his relative Jabr was challenging,[135] though the two issues he concentrated on were to secure for his village sufficient food supplies and to prevent Qawiqji's men from getting a foothold in the Druze villages of Jath, Yanuh and Yarka. Upon his request, he met with Abba Ḥushi whom "he had known already when his father Sa'id was still alive."[136]

The meeting and the intervention of Abba Ḥushi galled Palmon

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[133] HA 105/95 and SA FM 2565/8, Palmon Report, "Our Activities among the Druzes," 2 August 1948.

[134] HA 105/95, Report of 27 July 1948.

[135] Sheikh Marzuq belonged to what had been the leading branch of Mu'addi family since the Ottoman period. The chiefs of the branch were *multazims* from at least 1880 until 1906; Marzuq Family Private Archives.

[136] HA 105/95, Auerbach report, "Meeting with Sheikh Marzuq and Sheikh Raba," 1 August 1948.

and his team who were the main instigators of contacts with Druze collaborators ever since Abba Ḥushi had lost his monopoly over "Druze affairs." When they called him to order for acting among the Druzes without consulting them (i.e., Palmon and Shakhevitch), Abba Ḥushi immediately sent a letter to Reuven Zaslani (Shiloah) with copies to five other people (among them Shakhevitch) in which he defended his position. Abba Ḥushi stated that first of all he had not initiated the meeting. Moreover:

> All relations with the Druzes in the country and in the neighboring countries have been created through my constant work for 15 years.... Shakhevitch is wrong in his estimate of which people have influence among the Druzes of the Western Galilee: Marzuq is the man, not Jabr.[137]

Palmon was so piqued by the "independent" action of Auerbach, that he threatened to resign. According to him Auerbach had been meddling in Druze affairs at a time when he had already succeeded to reconcile between the two Mua'ddi rivals and was drawing up plans for cooperation between the Druzes of Western Galilee and the Jews:

> Because it is impossible to work under such conditions I request to be relinquished from my services [in the Minorities Department] or to stop Haim Auerbach's meddling in the affairs.... Sheikh Jabr Dahish [Mu'addi] is the man whom we trust because he has the support of Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun and Sheikh Salih Khnayfis and has proven his loyalty on many occasions.[138]

Alluding to the meeting with Sheikh Marzuq, Palmon again emphasized the role played by the three main collaborators: "Thanks to continuous relations with these three Druzes [Jabr, Salih and Labib], we achieved what has been achieved."[139]

The rivalry between Palmon and his team from the Ministry of Minorities and Abba Ḥushi, the latter backed by military intelligence officers, may be seen as rivalry between patrons over clients. In this case, each patron wanted to avoid losing his monopoly over Druze affairs while the Druzes as clients were using their patrons so as to safeguard their future positions of political

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[137] SA FM 2565/8, Abba Hushi to R. Zaslani, 1 September 1948.

[138] Ibid., Salmon to Shitrit, 2 August 1948.

[139] Ibid., and HA 105/95, Palmon report, "Our Activities among the Druzes," 5 August 1948.

power in the new state. Even though the Druze villages in the Galilee were as yet beyond the control of the IDF, chiefs from leading families who since the 1930s had insisted on maintaining neutrality, began exploiting the intrigues of their Zionist patrons in order to advance their own clannish interests. It was this web of new relationships, woven during the war with a few chosen chiefs, that later turned into the framework the state would use to deal with the entire Druze community.

When at the end of July contacts with chiefs from the Khayr and Tarif clans intensified, the Commander of the IDF's Brigade 7, Dunkelman, became eager to take the five remaining Druze villages in Western Galilee, Abu Snan, Julis, Yarka, Jath and Yanuh, by force.[140] The operation, however, was put on hold and negotiations continued. On 19 August, Ya'acov Shim'oni reported to Elias Sasson that:

> Our intensive treatment now focuses on the Druzes of the Western Galilee's villages which are actually situated in the neutral zone between our front-lines and those of Qawiqji... Our efforts are geared to keeping them in supportive neutrality towards us and hostile towards Qawiqji and to ensure they put armed resistance against any attempt of Qawiqji to control them.... As we have seen, there are among them different traits: a man such as Jabr al-Dahish, for example, is very obsessed and more than the religious chiefs wants to conclude with us serious and material matters .... When I speak of "our" treatment or "our" efforts, I mean the help of the team which, day-by-day, is dealing with the issue, Mordekhai Shakhevitch and Amnon [Yanai], with whom I and Ezra [Danin] visited [the area] a couple of days ago.[141]

Probably the visit to the area Shim'oni mentions was arranged following information they had received from a "Druze notable" in Yarka that Sheikh Marzuq was hosting Rasul al-Khatib, an Arab nationalist from Acre who had joined Qawiqji after the fall of that city in May. Rasul, who became Qawiqji's political adviser, had allegedly come to gauge what attitude the Druzes were willing to take up vis-à-vis the Jews. In the home of Marzuq he met with Sheikh Salman Khayr of Abu Snan and Sheikh Salman Tarif of Julis, whom he tried to convince to start military training in their villages and to give him a list of the arms they had access to. Salmān Tarif was against conveying such a list since "the arms were in private pos-

[140] IDFA 721/72/310, operation order of 28 July 1948; see also Gelber "Druze and Jews," p. 237.

[141] SA FM 2565/8, Shim'oni to Sasson, 19 August 1948.

session." Rasul also tried to convince them to let ALA forces into the villages. Again the Druzes refused. The Zionist report that contains this story states that Rasul had close relations "with Druze youth who had influence within the Druze community" and then concludes:

> The house of Rasul is found in Acre... The chief commander of [the local police] and the chief commander of Brigade 7 [Dunkelman] agreed with me that the house of Hasib [Khatib] Rasul should be blown up immediately. We should hope that Rasul will realize that his house has been blown up in connection with his activities among the Druzes and his visit to Yarka. It will not be difficult for him, then, to guess that it was his Druze friends who informed us about his activities.[142]

On the same day this report was written, Ezra Danin, Senior Adviser on Arab Affairs at the Foreign Ministry and one of those who were negotiating with the Druzes and a promoter of the Druze Unit in the IDF, sent a response to a letter he had received on 29 July from one Yitzhak Avira who apparently had complained that "Druzes and Christians are seen as '*kosher*' and Muslims as 'non-*kosher*,'" implying that none of them were "*kosher*." Danin wrote:

> Concerning [our preferential] treatment of the Druzes and their treachery: We have not been ignoring for even one moment our experience and knowledge of the Druzes and the Christians. They are not different from the Muslims, perhaps they are even worse. What determined their attitude is choice, or rather the lack of choice. While the Muslims are relying on their hinterland, these [the Druzes] are weak; we can use their lack of choice when we are alone fighting in the war. Knowing the other is important, but this is not decisive. If we know a priori the ways of the ally in distress, his characteristics and his past, we will somehow manage.[143]

By the beginning of August, the Druze villages along the Carmel and in the Galilee were divided into three groups according to the military situation then prevailing. The area of the Carmel with Shafa'amr was by then already part of the Israeli administration, the area of Julis, Yarka and Abu Snan, though situated in the neutral zone, was under the Israeli sphere of influence, while Jath, Yanuh, Kisra, Kufr Smai', Buqay'a, Hurfayish, Bait-Jan, Rama, Sajur, 'Ayn al-Asad, and Mghar were still under the control of the ALA. How-

[142] HA 105/95, Report of 14 August 1948; for further contacts between Rasul and Yarka, see Parsons, pp. 167-168.

[143] SA FM 2570/11, Danin to Avira, 16 September 1948; see also Parsons, p. 160; Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 240.

ever, the latter traditionally followed the guidance of the leading families of the second area. Of this the Israeli experts of the various departments, notably the Middle East Department, must certainly have known. For example, around this time a liaison officer for "Religious Affairs of the Muslims and Druzes" in the north, Tuvia Cohen, began to frequent Julis and Abu Snan in order to find out what the "religious demands" were of the Druzes there. In a long report he was to submit a few months later to the Ministry of Religions, he set out a policy which he thought could gain the loyalty of the Druze community:

> The Druze community in Israel numbers today 15,000 [those still under the ALA were also included] ... The majority are peasants, living in primitive conditions and their cultural level is low ... The religious leadership is today in the hands of Tarif family, from the village of Julis, though there is, actually, an internal strife between several leading families over influence within the community.[144]

Cohen seems to have favored encouraging 'Abdalla Khayr to resume his political activities after his defeat in the 1930s.

Another visitor was Shim'oni, who together with Ezra Danin and a group of Israelis from the Political Department of the Foreign Minister (Palmon, Mekler, Yanai, Shakhevitch, Friedman, Aliovitz, and Sasson) came to Abu Snan to meet with chiefs of the three leading families. The encounter took place just when the ALA had entered Yanuh, and there was great concern that Qawiqji might attempt to enter other villages in the area whose leaders had not taken up a unified position. That Amīn Tarif, Marzuq and 'Ali Mu'addi, and 'Abdalla Khayr were absent at this meeting reflects the division that prevailed at the period among the leading Druze families. The presence of Farhan from the Hamada branch of Tarif, which was opposed to Sheikh Amin's supremacy within the family, meant that Tarif family was about to face the same split already dividing the Mu'addi family after Jabr, backed by the Israelis, had set out to challenge Marzuq. However, all chiefs of the leading families were by now aware that an Israeli victory in the Galilee was a foregone conclusion. The question came up again of taking the Druze villages by force. The four Druze chiefs requested that "the IDF should refrain from occupying the ... Druze villages [Abu Snan, Julis and Yarka] and to let them exercise their independence

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[144] SA FM 2565/8, "Memorandum, Re: the Treatment of the Druze Community in Israel," T. Cohen to the Ministry of Religions, 10 August 1949.

and neutrality on the assumption that they will not permit Qawiqji forces to enter the area" and promised to fight against him. "While Salman Tarif presented Druze neutrality as a mask, Salman Khayr emphasized that it was true."[145]

During the period of the second truce, which for the north lasted until the end of October, the Israelis tried to establish contact with Druzes from the villages which were still under the ALA. At the end of July a member of the 'Arayda family from Mghar went to the nearby Jewish settlement of Migdal to inform them that the Druzes of Mghar "are interested in having the Hagana take over their village."[146] At the beginning of October, through Friedman, Dunkelman met with "Druze notables" from Bait Jan, Hurfaysh and Buqay'a, to persuade them to start operating behind ALA lines, an idea they rejected as "too risky."[147] By the end of September, anticipating the resumption of the war in the Galilee, Muslim notables now also began seeking contact with the Israelis so as to try to secure their villages' safety, no doubt out of desperation at the ALA's inability to defend them against the IDF. As a Zionist report has it:

> It seems that anarchy prevails within the ALA. Senior officers are busy accumulating money and every occasion is exploited to cheat people out of money by intimidation.... The local population has had enough of the fictitious stories of the ALA commanders about the [near] victory—when they started seeing the corruption and suffering from robbery and coercive acts, they began to try to contact the Jews proposing surrender.[148]

In an effort to offset the low morale of the local population, the headquarters of the ALA in Tarshiha spread "rumors" that reinforcements were on their way from Syria.[149]

Except for Yanuh, no Druze village contained ALA forces. By the end of September the small garrison in Yanuh was reinforced as part of the defense of the ALA headquarters in Tarshiha. On 15 October the war resumed in the south of Palestine/Israel and

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[145] Ibid., Shim'oni to FM, "Operations with the Druze," 15 September 1948; see Parsons, pp. 170-174. According to Gelber, at this meeting, "the religious leader Sheikh Amin Tarif of Julis regarded their neutrality as a mask," but the report he relies on explicitly refers to Salman and not Amin; see Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 238.

[146] HA 105/95, Report of 23 July 1948.

[147] See Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 238.

[148] IDFA 2384/50/10, Investigation Section to Yadin, 27 September 1948.

[149] Ibid.

on 29 October the IDF launched an operation into the Galilee whereby within sixty hours it conquered the central Galilee and eleven villages in southern Lebanon. However, a fierce battle took place at Yanuh where Druze soldiers from the IDF's Minorities Unit faced unexpected resistance from the residents of the villages of Yanuh and Jath which cost the lives of fourteen Druzes and three Jews of the Unit.[150] The battle may have been the result of poor coordination between Jewish and Druze messengers to the village, as Israeli sources have it, but it is certain that the Druzes of Yanuh were unaware that there were Druzes among the IDF's soldiers. Although the Israeli Archives have not released even one single document on the "tragic misunderstanding" in Yanuh, accusations were addressed at Jabr Mu'addi. Thirty three years later, Amnon Yanai claimed that it had been Jabr's task to set up a deal and to inform the people in the village of the arrival of the IDF: "A serious suspicion is leveled [against him] that he conveyed the message [of the IDF] to the ALA and some were of the opinion that he was acting for both sides."[151] Critical of the Israeli version, Faraj, who lives in Yanuh, interviewed people who had taken part in or witnessed the battle and arrived at a different version. After scrutinizing the official version of the IDF, accounts of Jewish officers who participated in the battle and descriptions in Israeli historiography, Faraj points out several discrepancies between these versions, notably whether there had or had not been coordination between the inhabitants and the Israeli-Druze Unit. The oral evidence from the elders of the village and Druzes who participated in the battle, he concludes, leaves one with the overwhelming impression that the attack had not been coordinated with the inhabitants of the village.[152]

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[150] The Druze soldiers on the Israeli side had been told that there was to be a prearranged, peaceful surrender of the village; see Carmel, *Ma'arakhot*, pp. 270-271. There still is a lot of speculation as to what happened exactly on the spot during the battle of Yanuh; cf. Koren, pp. 70-80; Gelber, "Druze and Jews," p. 239; Parsons, pp. 202-209; Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, pp.

[151] Cited in Koren, p. 71.

[152] Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, pp. 95-103.

CHAPTER THREE

# TOWARD SYMBIOSIS: TRADITIONAL ELITES AND OFFICIAL POLICY

## *The "Sons of Shu'ayb" and the "Sons of Israel"*

Following the incident at Yanuh Druze families of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel, who between them had lost twelve of their youngsters in the fighting, began receiving the traditional condolence visits from the Druze villages in the Galilee, but also from a number of Jewish officials. Among the latter was Moshe Yitah, the Director of the local office of Minorities Affairs in Haifa, who became worried about the contradictory reports he heard about how this tragic incident could have occurred, and soon after wrote to Bekhor Shitrit, the Minister of Minorities Affairs:

> These casualties were a result of an exchange of fire between the Druzes of the village [of Yanuh] and the Druze soldiers who fought on our side. Although we have no independent evidence, it seems from the controversial information which we received that the casualties were not inevitable. This incident has left a deep impression upon the Druzes, and to my mind it is desirable to start an immediate investigation to find out how the incident could have occurred. I think the incident is of such importance that it justifies you investigate it personally.[1]

Yitah's perceptive remarks, however, were brushed aside and the incident was dealt with as if what had happened was no more than a feud between Druzes of two villages in the Galilee and of two others on the Carmel. This meant that a ceremonial *sulḥa* ought to be arranged to reconcile the families or clans involved. Prompted by Jewish officers in the Minorities Unit and headed by one of them, called Ya'cov Barazani, a *sulḥa* committee was formed. Since he was a Kurdish Jew and thus could be expected to be familiar with Arab customs, the Druze families in 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel accepted that Barazani lead the *sulḥa* and that it would be held at the camp of the Minorities Unit with many representa-

[1] SA C/302/78 and MMA 1380/20, Yitah to Shitrit, 1 November 1948.

tives of the Druze community present.[2] A *diyya* of 1,000 lires was decided upon, to be levied from the villagers of Yanuh and Jath and to be paid to the bereaved Druze and Jewish families. However, in a gesture calculated to heighten the drama of the occasion and to drive home the point that, as far as he was concerned, the villagers of Yanuh and Jath had committed "treachery," Barazani refused to accept the money that was to go to the Jewish families, instead dividing it among the Druzes, saying:

> When I spoke with Sheikh [Labib] Abu Rukun he told me that the Druzes have *kavod* (Hebrew for honor). Do you really know what honor is? The honor of the Jewish people? Do you think that you can buy us and our honor with money? Know that the army does not forgive easily deeds of betrayal. We have [plenty of] time and [a long] memory. [Quoting an Arab proverb about retaliation he ended:] Even if we could hurt you only in another 40 years for the crime you have committed, the Jewish people will say that we acted rashly, and we may well wait for another forty years.[3]

This was, of course, a highly unusual tone to strike at a *sulḥa*, but the representatives of the two villages had little choice under the circumstances but to swallow the humiliation and contempt heaped upon them. In the official view, since the inhabitants of Yanuh and Jath had been collaborating with the Arab Liberation Army, they were to be held fully responsible for the tragic outcome of the Yanuh battle. For example, when at the end of 1948 schools were being opened in the Arab villages of the Galilee the inhabitants of Yanuh wrote to the Minister of Education, Yehuda Blum, and asked that they, too, could open a school.[4] Blum's attitude may be gauged from a letter he sent to the Ministry of Minorities Affairs:

> The village of Yanuh is known as one of the Druze villages that betrayed us. To the best of my knowledge "there is [a policy] of neglect" vis-à-vis these villages [Yanuh and Jath] on the part of the military authorities. If the policy of the government towards these

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[2] On the *sulḥa*, see Faraj, *Duruz Falastin*, pp. 103-104; Parsons, pp. 210-216; Razil Memet and Avi Blair, *Minikrot Tsurim, Siporo ha-Mufla shel Ya'acov Barazani* ("From the Clefts of the Rocks, The Wonderful Story of Ya'acov Barazani"), (Ministry of Defence Publication, Tel Aviv 1979), pp. 307-315.

[3] Ibid., for Barazani's speech at the ceremony of the *sulḥa*, pp. 318-319, and his subsequent comments, pp. 319-320; see also Parsons, p. 214; R. Faraj omits the part in which Barazani threatens the Druze sheikhs, pp. 110-111.

[4] SA MMA C/302/78, Salman Faraj (a teacher) to Blum, 28 December 1948, Khayr Amer (*mukhtar* of the village) to Blum, 28 December 1948.

> villages has been changed or will be changed, I would like to know about it in order to be able to take care of the matter of the children's education.[5]

While Israeli officials were hoping that the *sulḥa* and the collective accusation of the villagers of Yanuh and Jath as responsible for the fiasco would deflect the anger of the Carmel Druzes, some of the bereaved parents remained dissatisfied and insisted on getting to the bottom of things, while others began using the incident in the clan struggles that were being played out within the community. Less than two weeks after the *sulḥa*, Salih Khatib Abu Rukun, who had lost a son and a nephew at Yanuh, sent a letter to Shitrit asking for a meeting in which he wanted to discuss "the conspiracy" surrounding Yanuh.[6] Receiving no response, Salih jointly with Ridan Abu Rukun wrote another letter which clearly brings out that struggles were intensifying between the traditional leading families (Tarif and Mu'addi) and secondary families such as Abu Rukun and Khnayfis who had sought assistance from and had been collaborating with the Zionists since the early 1930s. According to the Abu Rukuns, the Yanuh incident was a result of the close ties between Sheikh Amin Tarif and Hajj Amin al-Husayni, "the two enemies" of the Jews and the Abu Rukuns:

> We and you have the same two big enemies. They are the two religious *hajj*s, Amin al-Husayni, overtly, and Amin Tarif, covertly. Since the year of the revolt [1936], backed by al-Husayni and seeking to constitute his religious leadership and his personal interest, he [Amin Tarif] has been poisoning the minds of his faction by preaching secretly in the prayer halls that we [the Druzes] are Muslims and that our ancestor, Salman al-Farisi, was the supporter of [the Prophet] Muhammad, and that each Druze who likes, helps, and supports a Jew is the enemy of God. As a result of his evil deeds and his perverting of the faith, some of our leaders have affiliated themselves with some of yours in order to solicit your aid against him and his faction. Since the British were destroying our morals... Hajj Amin Tarif has supported and used Jabr Dahish [Mu'addi] in his actions against those who opposed his [Tarif] leadership.... When we enlisted our sons in your armed forces, he and his colleagues, Salman Nasr from Shafa'amr and Munhal Mansur from 'Isfiya, issued a secret religious ban against anyone who joined the IDF.... However, some of the IDF's men, taken in by Jabr's actions and alleged loyalty, coordinated [their actions] with him so as to secure the safety of the [Druze] Unit... but they

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[5] Ibid., Blum to Y. Burla, 21 January 1949.
[6] Ibid., Salih Khatib Abu Rukun to MMA, 20 December 1948.

> did not know that he had previously been in touch with Hajj Amin Tarif, gathering people from his faction and from the Muslim headquarters [in Tarshiha] in order to kill our sons and all the Unit's [soldiers]. This man and his faction are now your loyal friends as is the faction of Shu'ayb... we entreat you to guarantee we receive justice for our children.[7]

With the "faction of Shu'ayb" the Abu Rukuns were alluding to a visit Shitrit had made to Abu Snan, Julis and Yarka on 14 November, when in his welcome speech Sheikh Amin Tarif's brother, Salman, had claimed that the historical relationship between the Druzes and the Jews went all the way back to the time of Moses, the name of the Druze saint, Shu'ayb, being Arabic for Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses.[8] By implicating Sheikh Salman Nasr of Shafa'amr and Munhal Mansur, Salih and Ridan Abu Rukun sought to reduce the influence of these two religious figures who belonged to the leading families of Shafa'amr and 'Isfiya and who were opposed to Khnayfis and Abu Rukun.

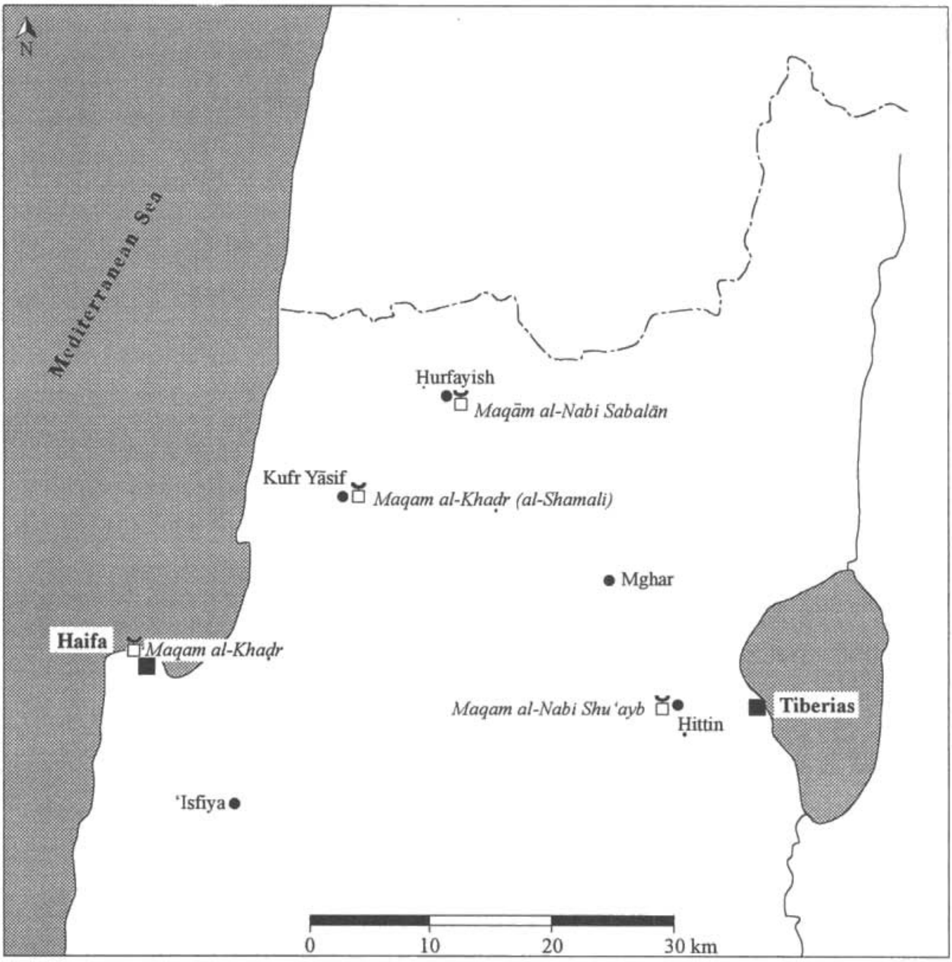
Since it took place only two weeks after the Yanuh incident Shitrit's visit to Julis, Abu Snan and Yarka appeared to signal to the Abu Rukuns that the new state would continue to consider the Tarifs of Julis, Khayrs of Abu Snan and Mu'addis of Yarka as the "traditional leading families" of Israel's Druze community. Shitrit had been accompanied by his Director General, Gad Machnes, and by a Mr. Knox and a Mr. Bruns from the American embassy. For the Druze chiefs the event, the first ceremonial visit of any Israeli Minister to the Druze villages, gave them a chance to show who of them was able to gather the largest number of people in honor of the Israeli minister and the two American representatives.

The traditional Druze hospitality and the warm welcome they were accorded made quite an impression on the two Americans who "could not believe what they had seen and were really astonished and stunned by the cordial reception" as Shitrit, to his satisfaction, could report back to Israel's Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion. There had been many speeches, the most important of

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[7] Ibid., Salih and Ridan Abu Rukun to IDF's General Staff, 5 January 1949. For the English I relied on the original Arabic letter and not the Hebrew translation that was sent to the IDF.

[8] SA MMA C/302/78 and FM 2565/8, Shitrit to Ben Gurion and Moshe Sharett, 30 November 1948.




Map 3.1 Sacred sites of the Druzes in Israel

them the one given by Sheikh Salman Tarif who had elaborated on

> the relationship between the Druzes and Israel, [and] especially emphasized that the friendship between the Druze community and the children of Israel is not new, but that there was a family relation "because we had intermarried" ... when Moses married Tzipora, the daughter of Jethro of Median. According to the Druze faith and tradition the prophet Shu'ayb, the Druze prophet, is Jethro.[9]

As we already saw, cultivating the prophet Shu'ayb and his *maqam* (shrine) in Hittin in the Galilee was one of the tools by which the Tarif family sought to maintain their spiritual leadership. In the years 1932-1933, the Abu Rukuns had supported the Khayr family in their attempt to take control of the *maqam* of Shu'ayb. Moreover, they may have expected that the ties they had maintained with the Zionists since the 1930s and the recent loss of their sons in the Yanuh battle would bring about a shift in their favor in the balance of forces within the Druze community. But the Tarifs may have been aware of this. Shitrit reported:

> I should also note that the notables of Julis (i.e., the Tarifs) took me aside in a secret discussion in which they requested me to restrain the Druzes who now serve in the IDF and put a stop to their disdain[ful attitude] since it damages the relations with their Christian and Muslim neighbors. They declared that they (the Tarifs) can recruit for the IDF a large number of young Druzes from respectable families.[10]

This suggestion on the part of the Tarifs, as quoted by Shitrit, that they might be willing to agree that young Druzes from the traditional leading families be recruited to the Minorities Unit of the Israeli Defense Forces formed a third factor—together with the Yanuh incident and the newly invented common Druze-Jewish history—around which the struggle intensified between the old established leading families and the new upstarts. Whether, as for the Tarifs, their main concern was consolidation of the position that historically had been theirs, or whether, as for the Khayrs and Abu Rukuns, they were eager to see the Tarifs sidelined, the principal guideline for both parties became how to position themselves to their own best advantage vis-à-vis the authorities of the state.

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[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid.

Frustrated by the indifference of the Israeli authorities to their letters, which remained unanswered, the Abu Rukuns now began mobilizing bereaved parents against the Tarifs and had them address a petition to Prime Minister Ben Gurion, in which they asked for his personal intervention: "It saddens us that while we have been sacrificing our children for the homeland with no sorrow but with love, [our enemies] sacrificed with treachery and conspiracy: you are aware of this but still you do not treat us right." Almost literally echoing Abu Rukun's earlier letters, they wrote: "There are religious leaders who secretly propagate the idea that the Jews are the enemies of God and the murderers of the prophets and everyone who likes, cooperates, and supports the Jews is the enemy of God...and should be religiously boycotted."[11]

A delegation of the Abu Rukun family meanwhile met with Yitah in Haifa and demanded an immediate investigation into the "conspiracy" of Yanuh. "They also complained that in the *sulḥa* with Yanuh and Jath, the names of the killers had not been mentioned explicitly.... In addition, they think that the sum of the fine (*diyya*) is very low."[12] The meeting with Yitah seems to have partly satisfied the Abu Rukuns because after it the Yanuh affair was considered closed as far as they were concerned.

On 6 December, about a month after the battle of Yanuh, a first swearing-in ceremony was held for the new recruits from the Druze villages in the Galilee who had begun joining the Unit. While no mention is made of their number, it is clear from a speech by Yusuf 'Alī, one of the new recruits, that among them were ex-officers and soldiers who had served in the British army.[13] The shrine of *al-nabi Shu'ayb* was deliberately chosen for the occasion since it now symbolized the newly discovered "historical" connection between the "sons of Shu'ayb," the Druzes, and "the sons of Israel." When we find that the event will be repeated annually for many years to come, we are in the realm of "invented traditions."[14]

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[11] SA MMA C/302/78, Bereaved parents of 'Isfiya, Shafa'amr and Daliat al-Carmel to Ben Gurion, undated petition (5 to 7 January 1949). I rely on the original Arabic petition and not its Hebrew translation.

[12] Ibid., M. Yitah to MMA, 11 January 1949.

[13] SA MMA C/1318/20, Arabic text of Yusuf 'Ali in Buqay'a, 6 December 1948. The first oath swearing ceremony of Druze soldiers was held on 10 October 1948, at the Headquarters of the Unit in Nesher (near Haifa).

[14] Cf. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, repr. 1993), p. 4: "Inventing tradition...is essentially a process of

When in April 1949 the northern district decided to open up the police force for members of the minority communities, the first to sign up were Druzes. Here, too, selection was done by Giora Zayd. Active in "fostering" Druze-Jewish relations since the 1930s, Zayd now dealt with Druze affairs within the Ministry of Minorities Affairs through the so-called "Section of the Villages" which until at least 1951 had a dual mission: to provide some assistance (through, e.g., food rations) to those Arab villagers who had remained in Israel, on the one hand, and to keep them under strict intelligence surveillance, on the other. Mordekhai ("Murad") Shakhevich and Giora Zayd were put in charge of this section and through it carried out Israel's policy in the villages of the Carmel and the Galilee. Their background in the pre-state intelligence service and the fact that personally they knew many people in the villages guided their activities and determined their priorities. It was Zayd who, on 25 April 1949, in a letter to the chief of police in the northern district, asked him to include Druze candidates in his list of new recruits, for which he suggested the first six names of Druzes from the Galilee villages.[15] As for the Carmel villages, Zayd gave his warm recommendation on behalf of two members of the 'Amasha family, Jad'an and Muhammad, immigrants from Jabal al-Duruz who had been among the first Druze collaborators during the years 1946-1948. They were to become the first policemen in the village of 'Isfiya, but by the end of 1949 Druzes from most of the Druze villages were serving in the police.[16] Although salaries were low both for soldiers and policemen (15 to 20 lire per month at the end of 1948 and about 30 lire a year later[17]), service in the army and the police provided young Druzes with a regular income at a time when economic hardship caused many

formalization and ritualization, characterized by relevance to the past, if only by imposing repetition."

[15] SA MMA C/302/78, G. Zayd to the Chief of Police in the northern district, 25 April 1949; the Chief of Police in the orthern district to G. Zayd, 28 April 1949; G. Zayd to the Chief of Police in the northern district, 11 May 1949.

[16] Ibid., Recommendation of G. Zayd for Muhammad 'Amasha, 27 April 1949, for Jad'an 'Amasha, 30 May 1949.

[17] SA MMA C/302/85, letter of soldiers from 'Isfiya to Ben Gurion, 16 November 1948, complaining about the commander of the Druze Unit over their low salaries (15 lire). 'Adil Abu Rukun, one of those who had signed the letter, remembered that the salaries of the soldiers as well the policemen rose to about 20 lire at the beginning of 1949 and then to about 30 lire at the end of the year (interview with the author, 14 October 1995).

peasant farmers to suffer food shortages. The first villages to receive regular food rations were ʻIsfiya, Daliat al-Carmel and Shafaʻamr.

### *Bread and "Games"*

In December 1948 the Galilee was brought under Israeli military rule and this was immediately followed by instructions of the Ministry of Minorities Affairs to its employees to prepare a detailed report on the conditions of each of the surviving Arab villages there. Reported on were the following aspects: (1) the size of the population before and after the Israeli occupation, and its distribution according to sex, religious community, and whether indigenous or refugee; (2) the names of the "notable families," their representatives and number of members in each family; (3) the names of the leading figures, their age, importance, position and attitude before and after the occupation; (4) the representative committees vis-à-vis the authorities; (5) the village's topography and the size of its lands; (6) the names of the Israeli officials, from all the various ministries and the army, in charge of the village; (7), (8) and (9), the prevailing situation as to employment, food supplies, education, health, electricity and the number of radio sets in the village; (10) the distribution of the newly instituted Israeli Arabic newspaper, *al-Yaum*, and listening to broadcasts of Israel Radio; (11) complaints of locals; (12) the situation of the "abandoned properties" in the village, and (13) suggestions to the Ministry of Minorities Affairs and others "in order to ameliorate the treatment in the village."[18]

Although documents released by the Israeli Archives are too few to allow one to form a picture for all Druze villages, the way the population in ʻIsfiya and Daliat al-Carmel were treated during 1948-1949 may serve as an illustration of the economic and political situation then prevailing and of the policy patterns that were then being established. The latter would, unvaried, guide Israeli policy toward the Druzes for the next thirty years or more, irrespective often of the many changes that were taking place within the community itself. Since all Druze soldiers so far enlisted in the

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[18] SA MMA C/1319/67, memorandum of the MMA, 24 December 1948.

army's "Minorities Unit" came from 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel, the two villages could count on special attention from the Director of the Minorities' Office in Haifa. Yitah clearly tried to fulfill his duties in a responsible manner, as often shown in the way he tried to deal with the complaints addressed to the Ministry by people who overnight had become "minorities" in a new state. Yitah faced three sorts of complaints: problems in the distribution of food in the villages; economic pressures as a result of the military restrictions on the movement of goods and traveling from one place to another; and frustration with the "Section of the Villages" and the men responsible for executing the policy of the ministry.

To cope with the food shortages that were the order of the day following the 1948 war, the Israeli authorities issued food cards to the entire Israeli population and special offices were established in the various quarters of cities and villages where supplies were being distributed. In all Arab villages the house of one of the *mukhtar*s or another "notable" was chosen for this purpose by the Israeli official on the spot. In 'Isfiya, Najib Mansur, who had been *mukhtar* of the village since the 1930s, and had involved neither himself nor his family in the Palestinian-Zionist conflict, now faced a challenge of the Abu Rukun leaders. In order to prevent radical changes to upset the internal balance of political power in the village, Najib Mansur accepted, or may even have initiated, the creation of a local committee to deal with the authorities of the new state which also comprised Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun and three other "notables."[19]

In Daliat al-Carmel, clan leaders failed to establish such a committee and village affairs remained in the hands of the *mukhtar*s of the three largest families, Halabi, Hassun and Nasr al-Din; by the end of 1948 the distribution of food was in the hands of the chief of the latter family.[20] As early as July 1948 the inhabitants of the two villages realized that there was an "unfair distribution" of

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[19] SA MMA C/1319/55, M. Yitah to MMA, 23 August 1948; C/1319/67, Report on 'Isfiya, 14 October 1948.

[20] Ibid., report on Daliat al-Carmel, 14 October 1948. In June-July 1948 the Nasr al-Din family complained that their family was not receiving the food supplies distributed through the chiefs of Ḥalabi and Ḥassun families, after which Yitah wrote to Quftan Halabi and Sami Ḥassun ordering them to make sure Nasr al-Din would receive their due; SA MMA C/1319/56, four petitions of Nasr al-Din family, 30 June, 4, 10 and 15 July 1948, and Yitah to Quftan and Sami, 13 July 1948.

food supplies and they began addressing complaints to Yitah. In a report to the Ministry of Minorities Affairs about the measures he had subsequently taken in the two villages, Yitah wrote:

> Because we recognized that the affairs of the two villages were not [managed] well, and we received many complaints from inhabitants concerning the distribution of the supplies, we discussed the matter and concluded that each village should elect a committee whose functions will be to conduct the affairs of the village, to receive and distribute the supplies fairly...and to open the school...Mr. Shakhevich was delegated to be a member of these committees and to head each [*sic*] in each village.[21]

Only two days later Yitah already wrote to Machnes, Director General of the Ministry that he had personal reservations about Shakhevich being made responsible for carrying out the instructions of the Ministry in the two villages:

> Despite the fact that I signed that letter, I am not at ease with the proposed arrangements. I think that it would be better for Mr. Shakhevich not to be part of the village committees but to supervise their activities on behalf of the Ministry, since there is no full assurance that the members of these committees will not continue profiteering in the black market by selling [the food supplies] there. This would harm his name and indirectly the name of our office.[22]

Yitah was proven right when at the end of September a first petition came in, signed by nineteen people from Daliat al-Carmel, which asked for food supplies to be distributed through the shopkeepers of the village because "the persons in charge here have not been distributing the supplies according to the instructions...but have turned the food supplies into a trade at the expense of the poor people."[23] Though Yitah personally intervened, the situation soon grew worse, and six weeks later twenty petitioners from small families claimed they were not receiving their food supplies.[24] Direct allegations were cropping up against Shakhevich who appeared

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[21] Ibid., Yitah to MMA, 30 August 1948. Complaints can be divided into two categories, i.e., those from ordinary people who were dependent on the chiefs of the big families and felt they had been cheated, and from the leaders themselves who in this way tried to involve the authorities in their internal disputes.

[22] Ibid., Yitah to Makhnes, 1 September 1948.

[23] SA MMA C/1319/63, Petition signed by thirteen people from Daliat al-Carmel to the director of the food supply in Haifa, 29 September 1948. The names of the petitioners suggest that their motivation was not clan-driven.

[24] Ibid., Petition signed by twenty-three inhabitants to Yitah, 11 November 1948.

"to sow the seeds of division and quarrel" in the village manipulating, as one petition had it, the competition between the leading families.[25]

While in the nearby village of 'Isfiya complaints about food supplies were rare, here too it was felt that Shakhevich was manipulating and encouraging clan divisions. Allegations came from the Mansur family. Although three youths of the Mansur family had been among the first Druzes to enlist in the IDF, one of whom had been killed at Yanuh, the leading figures of the family began to realize that after the fall of Haifa they were up against a new situation and to suspect that Shakhevich and Zayd had set out to deprive them of their paramountcy in 'Isfiya. When on 30 July, the IDF confiscated the car of 'Abdalla Mansur, son of one of the community's most respected religious leaders, Sheikh Munhal Mansur, the Mansurs saw this as a willful act of harassment on the part of Shakhevich and Zayd intended to prevent them from getting to their fields in the Marj ibn 'Amer and from overseeing their oil press in Mghar and to hinder Sheikh Munhal's religious visits to other Druze villages.[26] This car was one of five private cars owned by people in the two villages of the Carmel with three other cars in public service. Four weeks earlier the IDF had removed furniture items from the cottage 'Abdalla kept in his fields. He tried in vain to solicit the intervention of Shakhevich to have the confiscated items returned to him.[27]

On 1 November 'Abdalla Mansur, together with Najib Mansur, the *mukhtar* of 'Isfiya, was invited to Shakhevich's office down in Haifa. According to 'Abdalla, all Shakhevich invited them for was "to humiliate and intimidate" them, ordering them not to leave their village and refusing even to deal with their requests to have the car and the other items returned to them. "Humiliated" when

[25] Ibid., Petition addressed to MMA, 13 November 1948.

[26] SA MMA C/1319/55, 'Abdalla Mansur to M. Shakhevitch, 2 August 1948. This was the first of a number of letters in which 'Abdalla tried to persuade Shakhevitch to release the car that had been confiscated; when he received no answer, several letters were then sent to the MMA signed by himself and by the religious leaders of the Carmel villages; ibid., 'Abdalla Mansur to MMA, 8 September 1948, 27 October 1948, two letters, one signed by religious leaders of the Carmel to the Minister of Religions, and a second by 'Abdalla to the Minister of Religions, 28 October 1948, and Yitah to Ministry of Religions, 1 November 1948.

[27] Ibid., 'Abdalla Mansur to Shakhevitch, 30 June 1948.

"still mourning" his cousin killed at Yanuh, he sent the Ministry of Minorities a bitter complaint about Shakhevich: "Although all our requests have been rejected by him, ... we refrained from bothering you at a time that the government has its hands full [with other matters]... But now the cup is flowing over (*tafah al-kayl*). Shakhevich is known in all the Druze villages as spreading gossip and causing division for his personal gain, and for his unwise policy... But if your excellency... asks why people have not written to you about his deeds, I would say [we haven't] because [we know] the government is busy reorganizing and developing [the country]."[28]

In his comments on these and other allegations against Shakhevich, Yitah put them down to the "system of arranging and distributing the food supplies in the villages inhabited by Druzes and Arabs whereby a mutual jealousy has been created among the families in 'Isfiya as well as among the influential families of the Druzes and the Arabs [everywhere]."[29] At the same time, he accepted a suggestion to appoint Raslan Abu Rukun, brother-in-law of Sheikh Labib, as a salaried clerk responsible for the distribution of food in the village,[30] and granted Labib Abu Rukun a monopoly on the sale of cement in 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel.[31]

That no improvement in the situation was forthcoming, however, is clear from a complaint Yitah received at the beginning of 1949, signed by twenty-two people, to the effect that one hundred and forty-five families from Daliat al-Carmel "had not received their supplies of rice, potatoes, onions, dry grapes and other items." They reminded him that the people of Daliat al-Carmel had asked many times to have food distributed through the shops of the village instead of by "those people who make profits at the expense of the poor." They added: "We thought we had got rid of the colonial government, but we realize now that, on the contrary, the colonial regime and the discrimination between poor and rich are still with us."[32]

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[28] Ibid., 'Abdalla Mansur to MMA, 2 November 1948.

[29] Ibid., Yitah to MMA, 9 November 1948.

[30] Ibid., Yitah to MMA, 30 August 1948.

[31] Ibid., Yitah to the cement company Sahar, 12 September 1948.

[32] SA MMA C/1319/63, Petition signed by twenty-two people from Daliat al-Carmel to Yitah, 2 January 1948; names of the petitioners show they come from different families.

At the end of February 1949, shortly after the first general elections to the Knesset, Israel's parliament, the Minorities Office in Haifa sent one of its employees to look into the matter and provide Yitah with a list of the shopkeepers in the two villages.[33] But, again, no changes followed until at least the end of the year. On 10 March petitioners from Daliat al-Carmel wrote to Yitah:

> Before the general elections, you and others made ringing promises about equality of rights, but all we are witnessing is inequality in rights, selfishness, and political games going on until now... If we had known [previously] that the supplies of food in Daliat al-Carmel are the subject of a political game, we would have given our support to any party capable of defending our rights.[34]

In the run-up to the elections the Villages Section of Shakhevich and Zayd had conducted an active campaign in the Druze villages so as to guarantee as many Druze votes for MAPAI (*Mifleget Po'alei Eretz Yisrael*, "Party of the Workers of the Land of Israel"), the ruling political party in Israel that was to remain in power until 1977. Loyalty of the clans' chiefs to the party government officials considered as loyalty to the new state. So as to overcome the detrimental problem of clan divisions while at the same time encouraging competition and dispute among the clans, Arab lists were created that were simply offshoots from MAPAI. Candidates on such lists were themselves representatives of clans in their villages and thus were expected to mobilize the clan chiefs there, wherever there were factions, so that each of them supported one such list. In this way the ruling party insured that the maximum number of Arab votes would go to lists affiliated with it. Although there is little evidence in the documents about such activities, it is common knowledge in every Arab and Druze village that the people of the Villages Section played a decisive role in mobilizing the clan chiefs to support the Arab lists of MAPAI.

If voting for MAPAI through one of the lists it was fielding in the elections was seen as a sign of "loyalty" to the state, voting for the Communist Party was viewed as a sure sign of disloyalty. Actually even voting for other Zionist parties was barely tolerated and seen as a form of protest against the official institutions of the new state. Given the clear system of "winners and losers" Shakhevich

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[33] Ibid., Yitah to the director of the food supplies in Haifa, 27 February 1949.
[34] Ibid., Petition signed by twenty-one people to Yitah, 10 March 1949.

and Zayd were creating among the leading families in 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel, very few members from the Mansur and Halabi families had the courage to stand up and protest against their methods. Informing the military authorities on the political activities of the Herut (later Likud) party of Menahem Begin among the Arabs, Zayd at one point wrote:

> I would like to inform you that the Herut people have opened branches in the Druze villages of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel. Israel Ginzburg, an ex-officer in the Minorities Unit, is organizing them. His representatives in the two villages are 'Abdalla Munhal [Mansur] in 'Isfiya, and Nur al-Din [al-Halabi] in Daliat al-Carmel. They are setting up the cells. The Arab public has already felt the threats of Herut's Arab men towards the compatriot rivals among their own people. 'Abdalla Munhal has a car in which he travels to the northern villages in the Western Galilee where he has been trying to establish such cells. I think immediate action has to be taken before this situation takes on acute dimensions.[35]

### *"Positive" and "Negative" Forces*

Taking "immediate action" was not a tall order since, at this stage of state building, the Israelis could almost at will mold the government institutions and the role they were to play in their new state. Many of these institutions were "novelties" for the Arab communities. Through the army and the Ministry of Minorities Affairs and its Villages Section the long arm of the authorities soon reached in every crack and corner, indirectly but also directly manipulating the distribution of political and economic power within the Druze villages. Obviously the ones to benefit were those who had access to the state agents. Control over the food supplies inside the villages and, most important, over whether one could work outside one's village, all this was in the hands of state agents. Although the Carmel area was being "treated as friendly villages," that here too inhabitants were restricted in their movements outside their villages led to further economic pressure among them

[35] SA MMA C/1318/25, G. Zayd to Defence Ministry, 31 May 1949. 'Abdalla Munhal had bought a new car when the one that had been confiscated in July 1948 was never returned to him. Nur al-Din al-Halabi later became one of the first Druze religious judges. In the late 1970s he failed in his bid to challenge the leadership of Sheikh Amin Tarif. He usually is among the Druze sheikhs chosen to represent the Druze community at official Israeli ceremonies.

and deepened their dependency on the chiefs and the agents of the state. By the end of 1948 the chiefs of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel tried to have restrictions on circulation outside their villages lifted and asked to be allowed to get to the town of Haifa directly through the city's Jewish quarters on the slopes of the Carmel. Although the Ministries of Minorities Affairs and of Transport had no objection,[36] the military authorities were not amenable and only relented after Labib Abu Rukun had handed in written pledges from all Druze drivers—who each had paid one hundred lire—undertaking not to stop anywhere in the Jewish quarters on their way to the city.[37] Restrictions on travel created shortages of a number of basic commodities, especially olive oil for which the Carmel depended on the producers in the Galilee. However, exceptions were made and those who got permission were generally members of the leading families of the villages.[38]

While a number of young people tried to bring some improvement in their economic situation by joining the Israeli army and police, others began looking for work in adjacent Jewish settlements, primarily in agriculture. Here, too, it was first of all the chiefs—through the officials of the Villages Section and the local Ministry of Minorities office in Haifa—who made such opportunities selectively available, but then also the Jews themselves, who were looking for cheap labor to work their fields. For example, in September 1948 the local council of the Jewish settlement of Atlit asked the Ministry of Minorities office in Haifa to find workers in the Druze villages of the Carmel and Yitah agreed without any reservations to what he saw as "employment from which both sides can benefit."[39]

When, after the war, hostilities had died down and Jewish construction work began in earnest, many on both sides believed that friendly Druze-Jewish relations, typified by the recruitment of Druze

[36] SA MMA C/1319/56, the *mukhtars* of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel to Yitah, 15 December 1948. A. Shahar, Director of the Transport Ministry to MMA, 30 December 1948. Yitah to the *mukhtars* of 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel, 2 January 1948.

[37] Ibid., Labib Abu Rukun to the Military Governor of Haifa, 3 May 1949, accompanied by the pledges signed by the drivers.

[38] Requests to obtain permission to travel to the Galilee to bring supplies of olive oil are abundant and most came from the Mansur, Hassun and 'Azzam families; SA MMA C/1319/55 and C/1319/56.

[39] SA MMA C/1319/56 Yitah to Atlit's Local Council, 13 September 1948. Atlit and other Jewish settlements south of Haifa absorbed about 100 workers from the Carmel until at least the early 1960s.

soldiers in the IDF during the war, would facilitate Druze integration in the work market. Quftan Halabi, the *mukhtar* of Daliat al-Carmel, asked Yitah to enable Druzes to find employment in Jewish reconstruction projects, notably in the area of Marj ibn 'Amer where the Israeli army was rebuilding its military camps "as the workers of the village are walking about the streets without any employment."[40] While Yitah, again, was in favor, the response of the officer of the army camp was a terse "We do not employ Arab workers"[41]—a policy the army was not to change until the 1970s and then only partly. Still, Yitah was helpful in finding job opportunities for unemployed Druzes, mainly in construction and agriculture outside their villages and in the port of nearby Haifa.[42] It signaled the onset of a process that in the early 1950s was to alienate the Druzes from the agriculture on which the community had thrived traditionally and steer them into a direction that would make them ever more dependent on the dominant economy of the Jewish state.

In 1948 agriculture still occupied more than 70 percent of the male labor force in the Druze villages[43] and many of the women, who helped out husbands and fathers, though official documents have them down as housewives or homeworkers. Although the Israelis had allowed Druzes of the Carmel and the Western Galilee to collect their harvests in the summer of 1948, wheat shortages forced villagers to look for outside supplies. In 'Isfiya, this led to coordination between the Mansurs and Abu Rukuns who, in July 1948, sent an urgent request to Shitrit: "We are lacking basic commodities, notably wheat and flour, because the harvest this year was very bad and our stocks lasted for only a short period."[44] Those who were in the good books of Shakhevich and Zayd, however, had no problem getting supplies and could even sell sur-

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[40] Ibid., Quftan Halabi to Yitah, 15 January 1949.

[41] Ibid., Adjutant Officer of the camp to Yitah, 8 February 1949.

[42] Ibid., Letters from Druzes to MMA and to Yitah, and his recommendations for obtaining jobs or free circulation in order to work or to find jobs; e.g., from unemployed Druzes in Daliat al-Carmel, MMA, 1 January 1949; recommendations of Yitah for jobs to unemployed from 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel, 1 August 1948, 6 and 7 March 1949.

[43] We have only piecemeal information on the distribution of the labor force among the Arab populations during the 1950s; no distinction is made in government papers between the several Arab communities.

[44] Ibid., Labib Abu Rukun and Najib Mansur (on behalf of the villagers) to Shitrit, undated letter (probably 15 July 1948).

plus quantities in the Carmel. Jad'an 'Amasha, for example, was able to sell tons of wheat that, at the recommendation of Shakhevich, had probably had been taken from the abandoned villages of Marj ibn 'Amer.[45]

While the Israeli authorities were busy stabilizing the political situation and building up the economy of the new state, reorganizing the education and the health services of its Arab population was carried out not directly by the relevant ministries but passed through the Ministry of Minorities Affairs and its various sections. Schools in the Arab villages should have opened in September but this was delayed because of two main problems: lack of financial resources to pay for the salaries of teachers and for furniture (since in most villages school buildings had been heavily affected by the war) and lack of qualified Arab teachers—most of those who had taught during the British Mandate were now refugees. By the end of October, as *mukhtar* of 'Isfiya Majib Mansur wrote to the Ministry of Education that he had found two young men from the village itself who had a two- to three-year secondary school education and thus could make a start with teaching.[46] By February 1949 the staff of the school in 'Isfiya comprised four teachers, all from outside the village. Their salaries came from the local community and the Ministry of Education.[47] When Blum had visited the Carmel at the end of September the year before, he had found the school building of Daliat al-Carmel still occupied by the army. Blum and Yitah then did everything they could to get the building evacuated, but this still took two months,[48] and it then appeared that the army had done a lot of damage to building, equipment and furniture.[49] With two Druzes added from Kufr Yasif and Abu Snan, six teachers now operated the school, though as in most Arab villages financial assistance remained a problem,[50]

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45 Ibid., Shakhevitch to the Custodian of Absentees Property, 8 July 1948.

46 SA MMA C/1318/11, Najib Mansur to Ministry of Education (via Yitah), 26 October 1948; Yitah to Y. Blum, 31 October 1948.

47 Ibid., Blum to Yitah, 2 February 1949. Many documents in C/1318/11 provide further information on the development of the school in 'Isfiya.

48 Ibid., correspondence between Blum, Yitah and the military authorities, 6, 10, 14, 17, 19, 25 and 27 October, 10, 15, 17, 22 and 30 November, 2 and 31 December 1948.

49 Ibid., Yitah to the officer in Daliat al-Carmel, 2 December 1948; Quftan Halabi to Yitah, 22 December 1948, including a list of the damages caused by the army; Yitah to MMA, 6 January 1949.

50 Ibid., Blum to Yitah, 16 May 1949, Yitah to Blum, 2 February 1949 and 30 March 1949.

and teachers continued to scrape together chairs and tables. In May Giora Zayd came up with a characteristic solution: "I know that in the abandoned village of 'Ayn Hud there are school banks, please address an official request on the subject to the Custodian of Absentees' Property in Haifa"[51] so as to have these brought to Daliat al-Carmel. It is not clear whether Zayd's suggestion was followed up—according to inhabitants of the village, the lack of furniture continued into the 1950s.

Yitah also made efforts to establish health centers in the Arab villages of the north. There is a letter, dated 3 August, in which the *mukhtar* of 'Isfiya asks Shakhevich to have a physician sent to the Carmel to treat the ill,[52] and by the end of the month, two physicians from Haifa were twice per week giving medical treatment there. Yitah had provided the two physicians with a list of the Druze soldiers in IDF, adding: "Since you [will be] treating the sick people who belong to these two villages, please find enclosed a list of Druze recruits in the IDF who have families in these villages. I ask you to treat the sick in these families for a minimal, if possible only symbolic charge."[53] Family members of Druzes in the security forces received similar consideration when they needed hospitalization.[54]

One of the more delicate problems when it came to institutionalize the Druze villages according to the instructions the Ministry of Minorities Affairs had issued in December 1948 was disarmament. Ya'acov Sim'oni, from the Middle East Department of the Foreign Ministry, suggested it be handled with the utmost circumspection.[55]

The first village to be partly disarmed was Hurfaysh on the Israeli-Lebanese border. After the Upper Galilee had fallen into the hands of the IDF, many Arabs who had fled tried to come back to their villages, others came to see whether they could retrieve all or even part of their property, while some were trying to make

[51] Ibid., Zayd to Yitah, 16 May 1949, Headmaster of the school to Yitah, 16 May 1949. On "Absentees' Property," see below, pp. 130ff.

[52] SA MMA C/1318/16, Najib Mansur to Shakhevitch, 3 August 1948. By 1946 the Druze club had established a health care center in 'Isfiya.

[53] SA MMA C/309/59 and C/1318/16, Yitah to two physicians, 20 August 1948.

[54] Ibid., two recommendations for special treatment with minimum charges, Yitah to Director of Hadassa Hospital in Haifa, 13 December 1948; Yitah to the Government Hospital in Haifa, 28 February 1949.

[55] See Parsons, pp. 231-232.

a living by smuggling goods from Lebanon. Hurfaysh became a crossroad for such activities which made Giora Zayd suggest to the military authorities that the Druzes of the Galilee be allowed to keep their personal arms "because without the assistance of the inhabitants it will be impossible to keep tight control over the whole area [of the Galilee]."[56] Nevertheless, in March 1949, the police of Tarshiha confiscated the weapons of twelve Druzes of Hurfaysh, suspecting them of smuggling and illegal use of their firearms, especially after fifty of them had crossed the border and attacked Lebanese policemen in the nearby Lebanese village of Irmaysh. The twelve protested to the Military Governor of the Western Galilee in a letter of 22 March that the military commander of Tarshiha himself had asked them a week before to defend the area against infiltrations from Lebanon and that they had crossed the border so as to retrieve goods "gangs" had stolen from their village. They added that their arms had been bought by themselves for good money and had all been registered.[57] Their letter may have been coordinated with Zayd who for his part wrote the Military Governor the following day about the security situation in the area, informing him that a committee was to be established to disarm the Druze population, but that until it had started its work the Druzes should be allowed to continue carrying their arms.[58] Another five pieces were confiscated after men from Hurfaysh again crossed the Lebanese borders on 4 April and this time captured the head of the "gangs" that had attacked their village. To help them get their weapons back Zayd again wrote that

> it is necessary to carry out a partial disarmament among the Druzes, but not in such a way that will drive weapons underground and collaboration [of those Druzes] with the police will come to a halt.... Only by encouraging the positive forces within the [Druze] community can we obtain all arms without causing any disturbance.[59]

The "positive forces" was Zayd's term for those Druzes who willingly collaborated with the Israeli security; it soon achieved currency first among Israeli officials and then among the Druzes

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[56] SA MMA C/1321/27, Zayd to Minister of Police, 11 April 1949.

[57] Ibid., Police of Tarshiha to MMA in Haifa; and C/1318/25, Letter signed by twelve inhabitants of Hurfaysh to the Military Governor of the Western Galilee, 22 March 1949.

[58] Ibid., Zayd to the Military Governor of Western Galilee, 23 March 1948.

[59] SA MMA C/1321/27, Zayd to Minister of Police, 11 April 1948.

themselves. Zayd was shortly to move to the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, and the term became so firmly rooted that it is in use till today, together with "negative forces," i.e., Druzes who speak out against and act in opposition to official Israel policies (in Hebrew: *ha-koḥot ha-ḥiyuviyim*, "the positive forces," and *ha-koḥot hashliliyim*, "the negative forces").

The committee for the disarmament of the Druzes was set up on 8 April, and on 9 May, before carrying out any disarmament, formal questionnaires were distributed in the Druze villages,[60] formulated in accordance with suggestions Zayd addressed on 25 March to the Chief Commander of the Police in Haifa and to the Military Governor of the Western Galilee:

> It is known that a great quantity of weapons remains in the hands of the Druzes for political reasons...I suggest: A. to declare in each village that obtaining certificates for possession of arms [is possible], and to give a receipt to everyone [registering his weapon]; B. after a while, when we have a list of the number of weapons each villager possesses, we can decide, through the committee that was set up for this purpose, whom we will allow [to keep his arms].[61]

In due course, except for a few people who got permission to carry arms from Shakhevich and Zayd's Village Section, hundreds of pieces of registered arms were confiscated.[62] Putting weapons in the hands of a few selected people in each village, while all others who could officially carry arms were soldiers in the IDF, neatly divided the Druzes into two categories: in possession of arms, on the one hand, those who were on good terms with the clan leaders in the villages representing the "positive forces" within the community, and conveniently without arms, on the other hand, the passive masses of peasant farmers and workers led by those same clan chiefs, but also, of course, all those belonging to the "negative forces."

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[60] SA MMA C/1318/25, photocopy of the questionnaire distributed in the Druze villages 9 May 1948.

[61] Ibid., Zayd to Chief of Police in Haifa and to the Military Governor of Western Galilee, 25 March 1948.

[62] SA MMA C/1318/23, Police station in Yagur to G. Zayd, 1 June 1949, containing one of the lists of the arms registered in Daliat al-Carmel and 'Isfiya comprising 266 pieces.

*A "Magnificent Idea"*

With the experience they had gained during the Mandatory period and from their contacts with the leaders of the community during the war, Israeli officials put in charge of Druze affairs were well aware of the fabric of internal relationships within the Druze community. Thus, they had more than a fair idea of the clan disputes that reigned in each village, of the traditional factionalism that divided the leading families, and of the power religion had among the Druzes in general.

Strengthening the "positive forces" within the Druze community called for combining the two factors of politics and religion in such a way that they created an internal equilibrium of forces whereby each leader was allowed to play a role as long as he continued to manifest—even if in only a formal fashion—his loyalty to the state institutions as embodied in the ruling elites of MAPAI and the military. It also required that those leaders who refused to cooperate with the Israeli officials or failed to manifest any clear sense of loyalty to the Jewish state were deprived of whatever social standing or political role they had won for themselves among the community throughout the years.

How this policy was implemented finds clear expression in the first reports on the internal balance of forces as it obtained within Daliat al-Carmel, 'Isfiya and Shafa'amr, the first Druze villages to be "reorganized" and "reinstitutionalized." We have three such reports of the Ministry of the Minorities office in Haifa on the demographic, economic and political situations of these three villages, containing many details on the clan leaders who were important factors in the internal balance of power. In Daliat al-Carmel there were Quftan Azam (38 years of age), who maintained relations with his Sunni Muslim neighbors without risk to his career as the leader of what was actually the largest family of the Druze community in Israel, Sami Hassun (22 years old), who was determined to preserve the leadership of the Hassun family that had come down to him, and Yusuf Khatib Nasr al-Din (45 years old), the religious and temporal leader of the Nasr al-Din clan, who was on bad terms with the other two. The report also noted the prevalence of the traditional system of the *fasad* (dispute and gossip) among the leading clans.[63]

[63] SA MMA C/1319/67, Report on Daliat al-Carmel signed by A. Shalish and M. Piamenta, 14 October 1948.

While Shakhevich and Zayd did not see any need to interfere in the internal balance between the leading families of Daliat al-Carmel, in 'Isfiya they replaced the Mansur clan by Abu Rukun whose leader, Labib (then 35 years old), they made head of *Lujnat 'Isfiya al-Mahliyya* (the Local Committee of 'Isfiya), of which Najib Mansur (50 years at the time) as *mukhtar* continued to be a member. Najib the report described as "a man who has changed his skin" after the Israeli victory in the war. Although Najib Mansur was robbed of the status he had held as the paramount leader of the village and as one of the most influential chiefs during the Mandatory period, the Villages Section did not curtail the power and influence he had in the village because "he did show loyalty."[64]

In Shafa'amr, Shakhevich and Zayd helped the Khnayfis become the paramount clan, which meant reducing the influence the Nakad family had held till then. During the Mandatory period the religious and temporal leadership had been divided between the Sa'd and Nakad families respectively. Referring to the leading figures in Shafa'amr the report describes Salih Khnayfis (38) and Husayn Layan (40) as two men "who have given their hearts to Israel," while Sa'd Nakad (35) the only Druze *mukhtar* in the town, was described as "completely hostile towards Israel." When the report adds that Mr. Shakhevich "is trying to nip *al-fasad* in the bud," it probably refers to the "disloyalty" of the Druze *mukhtar* and his faction in Shafa'amr toward the Villages Section.[65] Sa'd Nakad was the only influential Druze leader who from 1948 onwards was completely prevented from taking any part in the political affairs of the Druzes. He died in 1995.

Dealing with the religious leaders was a more delicate matter. Since the Mandatory period the Zionists had tried to arrive at some understanding of the Druzes and their, to them, mysterious behavior. As we already saw, Bekhor Shitrit, the Minister of Minorities Affairs, had been impressed by the hold religion had on the Druze community during his visit in November 1948 to the villages in the Western Galilee where the story of "the Druzes' ancient relation" with Israel through Shu'ayb (Jethro) stood out in the speeches of all Druze leaders. The Tarifs had then requested that

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[64] Ibid., Report on 'Isfiya signed by A. Shalish and M. Piamenta, 14 October 1948.

[65] Ibid., Report on Shafa'amr signed by A. Shalish and M. Piamenta, 16 October 1948.

they be allowed to register the *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* and the property on which it stood, a plot of land in Hittin, as a Druze *waqf* so as to put an end to the dispute that had arisen about it in the final years of the Mandate between the Sunni Muslims and the Druzes. Shitrit promised to address their request directly to the Prime Minister. Setting up the *maqam* as an independent *waqf*, according to the Minister, nicely underpinned the "idea of granting the Druze community the status of a *millet*,"[66] an idea Ben Gurion had expressed before Shitrit's visit: "This magnificent idea, so full of vision and anticipating things to come, because I too think that we must foster among the Druzes an awareness that they are a separate community vis-à-vis the Muslim community.... The Muslims do not consider the Druzes as Muslims though they read the Qur'an and give to their children Muslim names."[67]

### *Sheikh Amin Tarif, the Opposition, and a National Council*

It is here, with the congruence between the interests of the Tarifs, who wanted to consolidate their religious leadership, and the "magnificent idea" of Israeli officials to start fully separating the Druzes from the other Arab communities, that the first notions on how to deal with the Druze religious affairs gradually began to bear fruit. As of 1948 we find many government officials, so-called "experts" in Druze affairs, beginning to busy themselves with the question of how best to separate the Druzes and reshape their traditions so that they could not just fit in with but even benefit the new political situation. *Maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* proved to be the pivot around which the systems of these various "experts" turned. For example, one of the liaison officers of the Ministry of Religions in the north, Tuvia Cohen, had learned on the visits he would pay to Druze villages in the Galilee that the Druzes believed their community would exist for only one millennium, following its foundation in the early eleventh century, and that it would then be brought to a close by a Last Judgment. Thus, he "explained,"

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[66] During the nineteenth century the Ottomans granted the non-Muslim communities judicial and religious independence in matters of marriage, inheritance and religious organization, but they continued to be excluded from the body politique of the Empire; Turkish: *millet*, Arabic: *milla*.

[67] SA FM/2565/8, Report of Shitrit on "Visit in the North," 30 November 1948.

anticipating this Last Judgment to occur within the next few decades the Druzes were in a state of confused agitation. Before the establishment of the state of Israel, the majority of them had thought of assimilating with Christianity,

> [b]ut now that Israel has become an important political and cultural factor in the Middle East, and because it has expressed its positive treatment toward the community, the idea of assimilation with Israel has become dominant among the majority of the leadership of the community.... Unlike the Armenians and the Kurds, the Druzes do not aspire to political independence. Until the present their loyalty, to any rule, was opportunistic and dubious, because their religious and communal particularism made this necessary. But as of now this particularism will have to cease, and they will have to integrate into one of the existing states, their assimilation will be complete and their loyalty will be true. When dealing with people who live in the Middle East, one should always take into account that there is no difference between religion and politics. Thus it is indispensable to recall that factors of religion can be transformed into extremely valuable factors of politics. Take, for example, the shrine of "*nabi Shu'ayb,*" which is in Israel. This site is the most sacred to all Druzes, much like the sanctuary of Mecca for the Muslims. This gives Israel an extraordinary tool by which to prove, both religiously and politically, its attitude towards the Druze community, which makes it a primary instrument for propaganda to prepare the ground for potential developments in the near future among the Druzes.... The Ministry of Religions should give the Druze community all assistance with regard to *al-nabi Shu'ayb*'s shrine. During pilgrimage time next year, it should again provide the facilities in order to celebrate the feast with even more honor and splendor (participation of the Minister of the Religions and other dignitaries, military parade of the Druze IDF Units, etc.).[68]

As a political instrument the shrine was first used when the oath ceremony of Druze soldiers was held there in December 1948. The second time was in April 1949 when the *ziyara* (the traditional pilgrimage) took on new features. Until then the pilgrimage to *al-nabi Shu'ayb* had not been any different from traditional visits (*ziyarat*) to other shrines, such as *al-nabi Ayub* in Lebanon or *'Ayn al-Zaman* in Syria. The *ziyara* to the shrine usually took place between 20 to 27 April, but neither was it an official feast nor did it ever attract mass pilgrimage from the Druzes in Syria and Lebanon. Before Sheikh Mhana Tarif rebuilt the site in the 1880s the

[68] Ibid., Memorandum by Tuvia Cohen, 10 August 1949.

shrine was probably known only to the inhabitants of Palestine and served more as a place of *nizr* (vow taking) for Druzes as well as Muslims in the area. As successor of Sheikh Mhana and as *qadi* of the Druzes in the province of Beirut, Sheikh Tarif Muhammad Tarif had then converted the *ziyara* into a religious meeting of Druze sheikhs. In April 1949, with the full support of the Tarifs, reshaping the *ziyara* began in earnest with the Israeli use of the shrine, and clearly followed the needs of both the Tarifs and the Israelis. The Tarifs needed the *ziyara* to shore up their legitimacy which was being challenged by a new and pro-Israeli Druze leadership, and the Israelis needed it to further drive a wedge between the Druzes and the other Palestinian Arabs in the state. In the process both sides were, of course, using "ancient materials to construct traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes."[69]

Nabi Shu'ayb's *ziyara* was held on 26 April and invitations to the ceremony were signed by Tuvia Lishanski, Chief Commander of the Druze Unit in the IDF, and were distributed in the Druze villages by the clan chiefs. They read:

> You are invited to attend the [military] parade which will take place on the day of the Druze pilgrimage to the shrine of the Prophet Shu'ayb in Hittin. On the program: Parade of the Druze soldiers from Battalion 300 with Druze sheikhs and inhabitants from all the Druze villages, *zebah* sacrifice and meal (*zabiha*) near the shrine. The pilgrimage will take place on 26-4-1949, departure will be at 09:00 from the camp at Nesher.[70]

In the early 1950s the date of the *ziyara* changed from 26 to 24 April and in 1954 it became an official holiday soon to be followed by similar novel, officially recognized feasts all fostering the new "tradition." Between 1949 and 1974 the *ziyara* was a prime occasion for Israeli ministers to appeal for "peace" in the Middle East and to make political statements about the military and political situation of the region. The last Israeli official to do so was the then Minister of Defence, Yitzhak Rabin—a group of pro-Palestinian Druzes forced him off the stage demonstrating vociferous-

[69] Hobsbawm and Ranger, p. 6.

[70] SA FM/2565/8, "Invitation [to the *ziyara*]," T. Lishanski, 22 April 1949. Both "*zevah*" in Hebrew and "*zabiha*" in Arabic have the connotation of a sacrifice and meal; Lishanski clearly meant "meal" so as to encourage the villagers to attend the celebration.

ly against the use of a "religious meeting" for political purposes.[71] While government officials thereafter continued to join the Druzes in their "feast" but stopped using the *ziyara* as an occasion for political speechifying, the shrine has remained the official site where Druze recruits upon joining the IDF swear a solemn oath of loyalty to the state of Israel.

By the end of 1949 the government began to allocate money to erect new buildings around the shrine, to widen the road leading to the site and to acquire new furniture. This money went straight to Sheikh Amin Tarif as guardian of the shrine. The importance the new function of the shrine had for the Israelis was not lost on Sheikh Amin Tarif, especially at a time when he was encountering opposition from a coalition that comprised old but also new rivals, such as Marzuq Mu'addi, Salih Khnayfis, Labib Abu Rukun, and Jabr Mu'addi. Some of the latter were backed by Israeli officials wanting to see a shift in the balance of power within the community, and they were preparing a general meeting of the "Druze leaders." This opposition coalition was equally aware of the significance the official ceremony during the *ziyara* had in the way it underscored Sheikh Amin Tarif's legitimacy in the new state. At the same time, Giora Zayd wanted to seize the opportunity in order to speed up the disarmament that had been scheduled to begin in May. Backed by Amnon Yanai, as representative of the Druze Unit and later its Chief Commander, and Zayd, as representative of the Villages Section, the coalition, two weeks before the *ziyara*, called together sixty-four clan chiefs to discuss the "future of the Druzes" in Israel. Though its common goal was to delegitimize the paramountcy of Sheikh Amin Tarif or at least to prevent the possible recognition by the Israeli authorities of his paramountcy,[72] the coalition proved fragmented and unstable because it contained too many conflicting interests.

The meeting took place in *maqam al-Khadr* (the shrine of al-Khadr) on 8 April 1949. Amnon Yanai and Giora Zayd together with Sasson (from the Intelligence Services, *Shirutim Miyuhadim No. 1*, a forerunner of the Shin Bet) and Haim Auerbach (from the Military Intelligence Services, *Shirutim Miyuhadim Tzvai'im*, in

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[71] For the development of this and similar groups in more detail, see Chapter 5 below.

[72] SA MMA C/1321/27, Report by Zayd on the Druze meeting, 11 April 1949.

the Western Galilee) represented the Israeli side, though they did not actually take part in the discussion. That these were all military and intelligence people and not civil administrators would characterize such meetings also in the future. No less typical of the Israeli attitude is Zayd's comment in his report to the effect that "the presence of the Jews in the meeting was a calming factor."

The one to open the meeting was Marzuq Mu'addi whose speech reflected the aspirations of those clan chiefs who were eager to start playing a role in Druze affairs: "This is the first meeting of our community under the Israeli government. There is no representative [body] of the community recognized by the government," and he therefore suggested to elect from those present "a council which will represent the community without taking into account the custom of the Mandatory period where three clans represented the community," i.e., Tarif, Khayr and Mu'addi. The Tarifs' representative in the meeting was Sheikh Salman who stressed the importance of maintaining the unity of the Druze community and suggested that meeting in such a holy place ought to put an end to the clan rivalries among them. But Salman Tarif made no reference to the actual aim of the meeting, that is, the reorganization of the community's affairs. Salih Khnayfis emphasized that "in reorganizing the community, it is necessary to add new representatives to the three families that have led the Druzes until the establishment of Israel." As reported by Zayd, his suggestions were supported by Jabr Mu'addi, by Kanj Qablan (from Bait Jan) and by most of the other representatives of clans opposed to Tarif paramountcy. That is, the majority supported reorganizing the community along the lines of Khnayfis' suggestions, whereby room would be left for the traditional leading families but new blood was to be added in the form of those chiefs who had given full assistance to the Israelis during the war of 1948. The council they elected duly reflected the balance of power the Israelis wanted to see fostered. Although Salman Tarif, Salman Khayr and Marzuq Mu'addi were elected, all others either had long-established relations with the Zionists, had played an important role in the Druze affairs during the war of 1948, or simply opposed Tarif supremacy, and included Salih Khnayfis, Labib Abu Rukun, Nimr Abu Hassan (from Mghar), Kanj Qablan, Yusuf 'Ali (from Buqay'a), Hail Tobi (from Rama) and Rashrash al-Husayn (from Hurfaysh).

Supporters of the Tarif faction, such as Mansur of ʻIsfiya, Mulla of Yarka, Asʻad of Bait Jan, Saʻd (Nasr) of Shafaʻamr and Halabi of Daliat al-Carmel did not make it onto the council because some of them had simply boycotted the meeting and others who did participate, such as ʻAbdalla Mansur and Asʻad Mulla, had no chance to be elected in a meeting of this kind.[73]

That the Israeli government did not hasten to adopt the results of the meeting may well have been because there were many differences of opinion among the various government officials and advisers. After the general elections of January 1949 the functions of the Ministry of Minorities Affairs were handed down to a special "Office of the Adviser of the Prime Minister for Minorities (Arab) Affairs," which was headed by Yehoshua Palmon. Although the Adviser had to coordinate his policy with the various ministries, his office set out to centralize the treatment of all Arab communities. Still, during 1949 and 1950 there were permanent arguments among Israeli "experts" in "Arab Affairs" on how to deal with the "minorities" in the most appropriate and efficient manner.

By January 1949, the Director of the Muslim and Druze Section in the Ministry of Religions, a certain Dr. H. Hirshberg, admitted that reorganizing the Druze community and separating it from the Muslims entailed many problems: "Political considerations oblige us to take care of the Druzes and to grant this community the same judicial and religious status [as the Sunni Muslims].... But it is difficult to [know how to] treat this community whose religion is secret and whose tenets are known only to a tiny portion of its members."[74] In the report he submitted on 10 August 1949, Tuvia Cohen suggested to make haste with separating the Druzes from the Muslims and granting them "the status of an independent sect." In the first stage of this separation it would be necessary to establish a religious supreme council that would have jurisdiction over personal status and inheritance: "This council will temporarily be composed of the representatives of the families Tarif, Khayr and Muʻaddi. After a while an electoral code should

[73] Ibid.

[74] SA MMA C/304/53, Dr. H. Hirshberg's "Report on the Activities of the Ministry of Religions during the period August 1948 to January 1949," 31 January 1949.

be decided upon according to which the community will elect the men suitable for this task."[75]

Cohen's suggestion admittedly had been influenced by the views of 'Abdalla Khayr with whom he had had a long discussion. As Cohen put it, 'Abdalla had a profound knowledge of every aspect of "Druze affairs," not only in Israel but also in Lebanon and Syria: "His views possibly reflect the prevailing attitude of the Druzes."[76] Palmon, now Adviser of Arab Affairs but, as we saw in the previous chapter, one of the Israelis who had been instrumental in shifting the Druze position during the war towards the Jews through his support of Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis, did his best to pre-empt the Ministry of Religions' proposals as they were bound to reestablish the traditional leadership of Tarif, Khayr and Mu'addi. On 12 October he wrote to the Muslim and Druze Section in the Ministry of Religions a critical letter on Cohen's report:

> A. The members of the Khayr family do not present the problem of the Druze community in a correct manner; B. Thanks to the connections we established with Druzes, members of this community have remained loyal to us. They [*sic*] established the Minorities Unit, and actively assisted us in the war against Qawiqji's army. Your report on the meeting with a member of the Khayr family ignores these facts; C. The government has as yet to make a decision concerning the communities. Therefore, please do not encourage in any way, whether by discussions, reports or suggestions, ideas which have not yet been approved.[77]

In his reply to Palmon, Hirshberg said that there was no one single family which presented the issue in a correct manner, and that it was necessary to listen to the representatives of the important as well as the less important families. His section's men had visited the Khayr family because the Tarif chiefs had come several times to his office with written suggestions on how to reorganize the community. Since his men had also visited some Mu'addi leaders "it was impossible to omit the Khayr family." He was adamant that his office had full authority to deal with what after all were restricted matters such as religious services, pious endowments (*awqāf*) and personal jurisdiction: "We have not been charged by any

[75] SA FM/2565/8, Memorandum by T. Cohen, 10 August 1949.
[76] Ibid.
[77] SA FM/2402/28, Palmon to Ministry of Religions, 12 October 1949.

Ministry to deal with the Druze Unit or with the war against Qawiqji's army and none of this is our official concern." Hirshberg also had not heard any Druzes raise objections to the traditional religious leadership of the three families. However, according to him, "appointing a religious head to the Druzes is also important to us for its practical aspect": since the government had an interest in separating the Druze community from the Muslims "it is necessary to propose legislation in the Knesset which will grant the Druze community independent legal status in religious matters.... This will form the core for the establishment of the [newly] organized religious community."[78]

### *An Inter-Ministerial Committee Provides Guidelines*

What both Palmon and Hirshberg were trying to do was give concrete form to ideas that had been floated in the sessions of an inter-ministerial committee the Israeli government had established in April to study "(a) The status of the non-Jewish population in the state of Israel, and (b) the creation of a framework for regular and coordinated relations between this population... and the Israeli government with its various ministries." In addition to one Shlomo Kadar, from the Office of the Adviser for Arab Affairs, and Hirshberg, from the Ministry of Religions, the committee comprised representatives of the Ministries of the Interior and Justice, and a representative of the Shin Bet. Four of its members, among them Palmon and Hirshberg, were selected to write the report of the committee.[79]

It was given to Hirshberg to present some main ideas on the political, judicial, economic and educational policies which, to his mind, would facilitate "Arab integration" in the Jewish state. With the Arabs under military rule, it was as yet too early to decide on the best political system by which the state should deal with its non-Jewish population, but "to be able to draw positive conclusions, we should [already now] eliminate the political systems that are not suitable for us."[80] After a brief survey of the experiences

[78] Ibid., Dr. H. Hirshberg to Palmon, 18 October 1949.

[79] Ibid., Prime Minister to MF, 9 June 1949.

[80] Ibid., Session of the Committee, 6 May 1949. Military Rule was imposed on the Arab areas during the war and was followed in 1949 by the establishment of

Europe had had in solving minorities problems since the First World War, Hirshberg concluded that the main focus ought to be on one issue only, i.e., to prevent the Arab minorities from coalescing into one single group which would "be Arab in its national identity and Muslim in its religion." For such a policy to be successful, the key was education. Establishing one single network of Arab schools for all non-Jewish youth, that is including Circassians, Druzes, Orthodox and Armenians, would be a "dangerous step fostering one Arab bloc and giving birth to Arab nationalist feelings among this youth." Thus he saw the curriculum for non-Jewish pupils as a copy of the Israeli army's policy. The "IDF's Staff have also adopted this system of establishing Druze and Circassian Units and have given them a great deal of publicity though as far as numbers and military importance are concerned, they do not amount to much." Since Israel could not impose cultural assimilation, the best way to deal with the minorities was "to divide and sub-divide them" into groups, each independent from the other, and to select the education suitable for each, but in any case, as soon as possible "to appoint Hebrew teachers ... in order to teach them our language." As to religious reorganization, Hirshberg sought to combine two contradictory principles:

> It is undesirable for the state to interfere in the issue of appointing men for the religious offices. On the other hand, it cannot be tolerated that the non-Jewish communities are given complete freedom in this matter. Even in Christian countries, the appointment of clergy requires the approval of the [state] authorities, or a prearranged consent between state and church.[81]

Summarizing his proposals Hirshberg stressed three principles on which any adequate formula ought to be based: the development of one single minority group should be prevented, the minorities should be dealt with in the regular ministries which also dealt with the Jewish population, and, finally, the state should treat all citizens without discrimination, whether Jew or non-Jew.[82]

Hirshberg's ideas were generally endorsed by the participants of the session; all agreed that future development called for a certain

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a Military Government. Both were based on the Mandatory Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, military rule referring to the Arab areas as occupied territory while the Military Government saw them as a "security problem."

[81] Ibid.

[82] Ibid.

measure of flexibility. If, more specifically, we look at the comments of the two representatives of the main offices in charge of the minorities, the Shin Bet and the Interior Ministry, we find the contradictory elements the proposal entailed between equality and empowerment even more clearly brought out. The Shin Bet representatives emphasized that the minorities ought to be kept divided because "they hate each other. This hatred goes back for generations. It is natural [*sic*] and we should not go against such a natural process and not try to crystallize them into one minority group. We have to treat them as minorities, each of them separately." The representatives of the Interior Ministry added that the minorities status "should in principle be one of equality of rights for every citizen [belonging] to these minorities. How this will materialize depends on the policy and how we carry it out. I suggest that we not give them a feeling of confidence, on the contrary, because in the end we are still a minority in the country. Do not give them confidence."[83]

When, on 9 June, the committee's small forum presented its ideas to the various administrative sections of the government, there were two categories in which the status of the minorities was divided, a civic and a religious-communal one. In regard to the first, the report indicates merely that "According to the Prime Minister's declaration in the Knesset, full equality of rights and obligations is guaranteed in the State of Israel for all citizens, without distinction of religion, race and nationality." The only operative suggestion here was to appoint an official in each ministry who was to be in constant contact with the Adviser of the Prime Minister on "non-Jewish" or "Minorities Affairs." Geographically the report also divided the minorities into two groups: there were the areas that were under Military Rule and those (e.g., Haifa) that fell under the civil administration. In the military zones each ministry was to establish local sections which would be under the control of the Military Rule but also connected to the Adviser of the Minorities Affairs. In the areas under the civil administration the Interior Ministry was to establish district officers in charge of the non-Jewish population.[84]

What the report in effect suggested was the creation of an effi-

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[83] Ibid. It is unclear what the representative of the Ministry of the Interior meant by "country" (*all* of Palestine?).

[84] Ibid., Report of the inter-ministerial committee, 9 June 1949.

cient apparatus of control under the Military Rule and the new Office of the Prime Minister's Adviser, now advisedly called the "Adviser for Minorities Affairs" and no longer "Arab Affairs."

Concerning the religious and communal category, the report indicates that "the Israeli government looks with a favorable eye on the organization of the non-Jewish population in a communal framework.... The representatives of the community have to be accepted by its members and are responsible for its affairs toward the government." The report does not pass up the opportunity to point to the propaganda aspects of the communal organizations it envisaged: "The government can use this framework for its foreign policy."[85]

### *Military Government and Parliamentary Democracy*

Adopted as policy, these guidelines proved flexible enough to suit changing situations and the different attitudes of the individuals in charge of implementing them. As such they were to dictate government policy towards the Arab minorities in Israel for decades. And it is significant that even though separating the Druzes from the other Arab minorities had started practically when the Military Government began treating differently at least those Druzes who had joined the army and their dependents, formal reorganization of the Druze community came only in November 1961.

In fact, what was happening was that, instead of trying to find a solution for the problems the post-war situation was inflicting upon the Arab minorities, the Office of the Adviser and the Military Government—which in 1950 succeeded the Military Rule that had been in place in the occupied areas since the war—approached it as a "Jewish problem," and set out to solve it accordingly. In the words of an unsigned report (probably originating from the Adviser's Office or the Shin Bet) entitled "The Problems of the Arab Minority in Israel": "It is impossible to deal with the problems of the Arab minority other than from the Jewish aspect. Thus it is better to call them: the problem of the State of Israel as stemming from the Arab minority in Israel." Unlike the report of the inter-ministerial committee, this report began translating the above-

[85] Ibid.

mentioned guidelines into practical language. Solving this "Jewish" problem "necessitates the establishment of a strong and effective Military Government that maintains direct relation with the Army and has wide authority" in the Arab areas. The justification it gives for such rule the report bases on two arguments: the relative inability of the civil administration to cope with multiple issues, and the security question. Military Government was required because the Arabs lived in the three principal areas near the borders with neighboring countries, namely the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev, and because "the smuggling, infiltrations of refugees who attempt to resettle their villages, to steal, to take revenge or to spy, are done with the connivance of the Arab residents of Israel."[86] The Military Government that was established in these three areas in 1950 was the physical embodiment of these two arguments, and—"strong and effective"—would not be abolished until sixteen years later as the main apparatus Israel used to administer its Arab communities.

With both the Military Government and the Office of the Adviser for the Minorities in place, a two-pronged system was created vis-à-vis the Druze villages of the Galilee. While the majority of their inhabitants now came under the rule of the Military Government and were also subject to the administrative apparatus of the Office of the Adviser, those Druzes who had joined the Minorities Unit of the IDF or the police force found themselves carrying out orders of the Military Government, and that moreover in areas that were predominantly Arab.

Ever since the state of Israel had become a fact, there were among the Palestinians who had been expelled always some, as we already saw, who somehow tried to get back to their villages, either to resettle, to visit family who had stayed behind or to retrieve some of their possessions from what the Israelis were labeling "absentees' properties." Others, driven by economic hardship, were carrying goods across what were now enemy borders and thus could be apprehended for "illegal" activities. Some were acting out of political motives.[87] Although the number of such border crossings—"infiltrations" for the Israeli authorities—had gone down by the

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[86] Ibid., Report on "The Problems of the Arab Minorities in Israel," unsigned and without an exact date, 1949.

[87] Abba Ḥushi Archives (AHA), report of the Shin Bet, "The Arabs in Israel, Basic Survey," September 1951, p. 26.

end of 1949, in 1950 the Israelis registered a total of 3,179 incidents with about a similar number of Palestinian refugees captured either when they were within the area of control of the Military Government or even before they had made it across the border. From the onset the Druze Unit of the IDF and the Border Guard, which had a high proportion of Druzes serving in its units, were put in charge of preventing and acting against such border crossings: "The [Druze] Unit with its small numbers ... is occupied in guarding the borders against infiltrators."[88]

Whereas, as we saw, the Military Government dealt with the overall population of the Druze villages in the Galilee with relative leniency, the "negative forces" within the community received treatment similar to that meted out to the other Arabs. Reports on security issues over the 1950s and 1960s, though they do not use the term itself, refer in length to the Arab minority as a potential "fifth column." Druze soldiers and policemen serving in the Arab Israeli areas, notably in the Triangle and the Negev, and executing orders from Jewish officers were viewed by Arabs as well as Israelis as "representative" of the Druze community as a whole—with opposite results. That is, the community had made itself impossible—"had burnt itself" in the Hebrew slang of the security report—in the eyes of the other Arabs in the country by the animosity its behavior elicited among them but no less by the "appreciation" that came its way from many among the Jews, officials and general public alike. The 1951 report of the Shin Bet views this situation as follows:

> In general, the Arab population certainly is hostile to the state and desires to annihilate it ... with the exception of (...) a few who got "burnt" [*nisrefu*] because they collaborated with the IDF and other [Israeli] elements against the Arab countries, as well as some parts in the Druze community that had already tied in their fate with that of the state of Israel.[89]

Shin Bet reports are generally not made accessible to researchers—the above report is one of only a few declassified documents found in the Israeli Archives. As Israel's intelligence department responsible for internal security the Shin Bet was very soon involved in every aspect of the everyday life of the country's Arab citizens. Shin Bet officials came from the ranks of the pre-State

[88] Ibid., p. 14.
[89] Ibid., p. 23.

security services, and then also from the Villages Section directed by Shakhevich and Zayd. The latter, together with the Jewish officers of the Druze Unit, were thus able to widen the circle of the "positive forces" through their relations with clan chiefs and through paid and volunteer informants. And the arm of the Shin Bet reached down into every corner of life: from the selection of new recruits for the army and the police, manipulating clan disputes so as to achieve maximum control in almost every village and close surveillance on all teaching staff, to control over travel and work permits to regions where road and building construction was in full swing for Jewish immigrants. Certain areas, for example Be'er Sheva, were entirely closed to Arab villagers looking for jobs. The powerful hold the Shin Bet exerted over virtually all aspects of life gave them, of course, a highly efficient tool when it came to "mobilizing" electoral support for the general and, later, municipal elections during the 1950s and 1960s.

Thus it was that the approach of the "experts" in the Office of the Adviser for Minorities and the more secret but highly intensive efforts of the Villages Section and the actions of the Shin Bet formed the Arab population's introduction to Western democracy. Among the Druzes, the general elections of 1951 deepened the rift between the faction of Amin Tarif and those who opposed it and between Jabr Mu'addi and Salih Khnayfis. Neither the printed word nor the political speeches in the electoral meetings[90] had any influence on clannish recruitment of votes. Instead, rumors and behind-the-scene pressures could prompt clan chiefs to change their political affiliation to rival lists without so much as batting an eye. Since the first elections of January 1949, the two Arab lists sponsored by MAPAI, the "Nazareth Democratic" list and the list of "Progress and Labor," sought to gain the majority of the Arab vote. Jabr Mu'addi was third candidate with the former while Salih Khnayfis led the latter. Although neither of them made it into the first Knesset, they did succeed in mobilizing more than 80 percent of the Druze vote.[91] The whole Druze population, in January 1949, stood at 13,853, or about 12.76 percent of the Arab

[90] *al-Yaum* divided the propaganda it contained between the Arab lists of MAPAI while *al-Itihad* of the Communists criticized the Arab rival lists as all serving the same master; *al-Yaum* and *al-Itihad*, April-June 1951.

[91] AS FM/2402/20, Adjutant Officer of the Military Rule to MF, 18 February 1949. It remains difficult to calculate the exact distribution of the Druze votes since most Druze villages have mixed populations.

population of 108,514, a percentage that was to fall by the end of the year when an agreement between Israel and Jordan led to an exchange of territory and the Bedouin of the Negev and the inhabitants of the Triangle became Israeli citizens.[92] Because of the low turn-out of the Muslims—only 25,000 participated in the first general elections—the Druze vote among the Arabs reached about 18 percent. In the second elections of 30 July 1951, MAPAI, cognizant of the demographic and political changes which had occurred since 1949, took keen notice of the chiefs in the Triangle who demanded representation, but equally of the rise of Communist Party supporters, notably in the area of Nazareth. The Druzes, whose votes had been unable to land them even a single member in the Knesset, began to be described in the Israeli media not just as a separate sect but as a "nation." The lists MAPAI sponsored now were called the "Minorities lists" and no longer "Arab lists," and their candidates were chosen in accordance with communal and regional criteria. About 59,000 Arab votes were distributed between MAPAI, MAKI (the Israeli Communist party), MAPAM (*Mifleget Hapo'alim Hame'uhedet*, "United Workers' Party"), and other Zionist parties with five Arabs from MAPAI lists, one of MAPAM and two of MAKI, being elected. These second elections set the pattern for all subsequent elections in the severe clan disputes that erupted within the Arab villages and in the use of many kinds of pressure, overt as well as covert, on the part of the authorities against the supporters of the Communist Party.[93]

Clan mobilization guaranteed a high turn-out: 80 percent, as compared to 70 percent among the Jews. The most severe and at times even violent campaign was waged in the Druze villages.[94] Both candidates, Jabr Mu'addi and Salih Khnayfis, had their clients in each village, chiefs who conducted the campaign in behalf of their patrons, while Mu'addi and Khnayfis themselves were in turn clients to their patrons, the Jewish party bosses: "The harsh campaign was fought over the votes of the Druzes between Sheikh Salih Khnayfis (head of list N [Progress and Labor]), and Sheikh Jabr

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[92] Ibid., Report on "The Non-Jewish Population in the State of Israel," 25 June 1949.

[93] There are many reports in the official archives which deal with the Communists and the Nazareth "problem."

[94] AHA, Report of the Shin Bet, "The Arabs in Israel...," September 1951, Appendix, "The Arabs in Elections for the Second Knesset."

al-Dahish (third on list ED [Democratic]). The former received 60 percent, and the latter 40 percent of the Druze vote."[95]

Clan disputes started with the nomination of the Druze candidates. A number of officers in the Shin Bet, with Palmon and Yanai, all agreed that two Druze chiefs, Salih Khnayfis and Labib Abu Rukun, ought to get the nomination of MAPAI. In his efforts to prevent Jabr Mu'addi from getting nominated Palmon went so far as to present the Foreign Minister with a police report on the "criminal" background of Mu'addi.[96] However, Jabr Mu'addi belonged to one of the three leading families (albeit he was not from the leading branch of that family), and it was Abba Ḥushi who insisted that, for electoral considerations, he could not be dropped. The 60/40 split in each village created two main factions in the Druze community. Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun continued to be loyal to the ruling party and supported his colleague Khnayfis, and his clan led a tough campaign against Jabr Mu'addi and his faction. Since Mu'addi was third on the Democratic List, the Abu Rukuns assumed he would never make it into the Knesset. But when the results confirmed that Jabr had been elected the rumors and personal defamation used in the run-up to the elections during June and July turned from a whisper campaign into open allegations against him in an attempt to have him disqualified as a Knesset member—the law prohibits people under criminal investigation to be candidates for, let alone members in, the Knesset. Two weeks after his election, Salih Abu Rukun wrote to Prime Minister Ben Gurion:

> (a) He killed his sister... in order to get hold of her money and the property she had inherited; (b) he killed his uncle's daughter because she refused to marry him; (c) he killed Sulayman Mulla [from Yarka], as well as another four people who were at the scene of the crime; (d) he killed Hamad Abu Rish [from Yarka]...; (e) in addition to being active in smuggling hashish and other illegal commodities he was imprisoned for six years in Acre's jail.[97]

When Ben Gurion wrote to Abba Ḥushi, Mu'addi's patron, asking him to investigate the whole issue, Abba Ḥushi responded:

> Concerning the letter of Salih Abu Rukun who called himself the Imam of 'Isfiya: As far as I could establish from reliable sources, Jabr

[95] Ibid.; the report does not even refer to votes for other lists (about 300).
[96] SA FM 2401/BII, Palmon to FM, 4 October 1951.
[97] 97. Ibid., Salih Khatib Abu Rukun to Ben Gurion, 15 August 1951.

> Mu'addi was subject to the three accusations (a), (b), (c) of Abu Rukun's letter respectively. Even in these cases he did not commit the crimes but others "at his inspiration." However, crimes of this kind have been committed by many other and "important" [figures] in the Arab [world] and notably Druze residents, and by Druzes whom I questioned.... In addition, the motives which led Salih Abu Rukun to write the letter have nothing to do with conscience and morality, but [are all about] disputes between hamulas etc., ... The mistakes made in the nomination of the candidates, and in the way the elections were conducted among the Arabs have all occurred despite the warnings I sounded before the elections.[98]

This last sentence was a veiled criticism of the way Palmon had run the elections campaign in the Arab areas. For his part, Palmon voiced his own criticism of Abba Ḥushi's interventions in the campaign and of his backing of Jabr Mu'addi:

> The personal issue of Jabr Dahish Mu'addi and the issue of the elections for the Knesset and the way they were conducted in the Arab sector are known to the Foreign Minister. Some time ago [before the elections] I even provided the Foreign Minister with the information [contained] in the report which had been brought to me by the police staff, concerning this man's previous convictions, which states that he was sentenced to six years in prison by the criminal court of Acre. I do not think that the letter of Mr. A. Hushi can change [these] things and improve the biography of the man.[99]

The above are only some of many examples of how the split between the Druze chiefs mirrored one between their Jewish patrons. In subsequent elections (1955, 1959, 1961, 1965, 1969, and even during the 1970s and 1980s) the system remained the same, only the actors would change. Clan affiliations to the factions would continue to waver and the chiefs would move from one faction to another in accordance with the changes in the political balance in their villages, personal and familial interests and as a result of the intervention of the "Arabists" in government departments. However, two sides would always be the clear winners in this game: the ruling party leaders, and Sheikh Amin Tarif. The former used the rivalry of the chiefs in order to deepen their dependence on them and curb their degree of free action, and Sheikh Amin could always count on the support of at least one important Druze fac-

[98] Ibid., Abba Hushi to Ben Gurion, 17 September 1951.
[99] Ibid., Palmon to FM, 4 October 1951.

tion to achieve official recognition as head of the Druzes in Israel. Although Sheikh Amin himself did not take an active stance vis-à-vis the two rival factions, apart from his opponent Farhan Tarif from the Hamada branch the whole Tarif clan was united in their support of Jabr Mu'addi since Salih Khnayfis and Labib Abu Rukun, backed by Yanai, and probably also by Palmon, were busy, since the meeting of April 1949, trying to widen the coalition which sought to delegitimize Sheikh Amin's paramountcy. Surveying the internal situation of the Druze community, the Shin Bet report of September 1951 acknowledges Sheikh Amin Tarif as still the most widely accepted leader and most likely to be appointed as the overall spiritual leader of the community:

> Concerning the post of religious head of the Druzes in Israel there is as yet no final decision because the Druzes are arguing among themselves against the background of the rivalry between the three families [Tarif, Khayr and Mu'addi]... But the most widely accepted of them is Sheikh Amin Tarif from the village of Julis.... The attempts to establish a national council of the Druze community led to immediate rivalries and disputes between the chiefs of the "notable" families.... It is true that a national council was established in January 1950, but the disagreement still goes on.

Comprising 'Abdalla Khayr, Labib Abu Rukun, Salih Khnayfis, Marzuq Mu'addi, Farhan Tarif and Jabr Mu'addi, the council mentioned was set up to form an opposition to Sheikh Amin,[100] but the elections of 1951 proved to the Israelis who had been behind the establishment of the council how vulnerable in fact such coalitions against Amin Tarif were when one of its members, Jabr Mu'addi, turned into a main rival and, backed by Abba Ḥushi, was able to prevent radical changes in the balance of forces in favor of Salih Khnayfis and Labib Abu Rukun from taking place.

In order to compensate the latter for having failed to get him nominated as candidate for the Knesset elections, in reward for the service he had paid since the 1950s, Palmon and Yanai included his village, 'Isfiya, and the nearby village of Daliat al-Carmel to become the first with Druze nominated local councils. This meant setting aside Najib Mansur as *mukhtar* and promoting the Abu Rukuns in his stead. The Mansurs remained loyal in their support of Jabr and Abba Ḥushi, though they had now lost their paramountcy in the village. In Daliat al-Carmel, the 'Azzam branch of the

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[100] AHA, Report of the Shin Bet, "The Arabs in Israel...," pp. 14-15.

Halabi family faced a challenge similar to that of the Mansurs, but they tried to upset the apple cart by joining Menahem Begin's Herut Party.[101] The chiefs of the Halabi clan soon became aware, however, that in order to survive in this harsh competition among clans one had no choice but to cultivate relations with the authorities, i.e., the ruling party, and they quit Herut again soon after. In other words, in order to stay in the game, there was actually only one option: adapt to the new constellation of power in place since the creation of the Jewish state. The following pages offer a closer look at how this game was being played.

### *Patrons and Clients*

Jabr Mu'addi firmly retained his position as "representative" of the Druze community until 1981. Labib Abu Rukun had to wait until the fourth elections of 11 March 1959 when Salih Khnayfis was made to vacate his seat for his former colleague, bringing to an end the fragile coalitions he had maintained since the 1930s. When early elections for the fifth Knesset, on 15 August 1961, shortened his stay in the Knesset, Abu Rukun was to receive true compensation when that same year he was awarded one of the highest positions in the newly established Druze religious court. When the third elections brought the Democratic list only two seats, Jabr kept his because Sayf al-Din al-Zu'bi decided to resign.[102] Only when we come to the elections of 1969 do we find that the Arab as well as the Druze vote to the government-sponsored Arab lists begins to decline, following socio-economic and political changes that will be dealt with in the following chapters. As already mentioned, Mu'addi continued to be nominated to such lists but when in 1981 none of the lists crossed the minimal barrier of 1 percent of total votes cast, his political career came to an end. With the upheaval in the Israeli political scene following the elections of 1977 Druze candidates could join the lists of the Likud

[101] Ibid., p. 15.

[102] The resignation of Zu'bi was probably prearranged with Jabr in the event that their list would not gain three seats. In 1983 the two sons of Jabr killed Hammad Abu Rbay'a, the Beduin "representative," for refusing "to honor an agreement" of rotation made allegedly between them prior to the elections to the eighth Knesset at the end of 1973.

and Shinui parties and thus challenge the whole system of the MAPAI/Labor sponsored lists.[103]

While the coalition of Druze chiefs who had been collaborating with the Zionists prior to 1948 never seriously threatened Sheikh Amin Tarif, the latter continued to strengthen his legitimacy among the religious chiefs. The shrines of Nabi Shu'ayb in Hittin, al-Khader in Kufr Yasif and religious sites in other Druze villages became principal places for "religious meetings," where till today the religious sheikhs discuss and decide upon all manner of political, social and cultural issues. At least about twenty such meetings were held between 1951 and 1953.[104] Ever since the Israeli authorities had, in 1949, begun using the holy shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb in order to consolidate the ties of the community with the IDF and the state Sheikh Amin had wanted to resettle Hittin—then an abandoned Sunni-Muslim village—with demobilized Druze soldiers, and five months after the first military parade near the shrine, he wrote to Prime Minister Ben Gurion and to the Minister of Religions:

> Because we are aware that the government of Israel is going to settle the abandoned (Palestinian) villages with other (Jewish) inhabitants, and since among the abandoned villages there is the village of Hittin ... which was inhabited by Muslims, but where there is the shrine of our honored prophet Jethro [*sic*], which is a sanctuary for the Druze community, and since in the Minorities Unit of the IDF there are many Druze youth from Israel and, particularly, from Jabal al-Duruz in Syria to where they cannot return, for all these [reasons] we request of you to allocate this abandoned village to Druze discharged soldiers, notably those whose origin is Jabal al-Duruz in Syria. Such action by the Israeli government will give us great satisfaction because the sacred site will then be settled by Druzes who can provide the adequate and deserved guard.[105]

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[103] On the changes in the Arab vote until 1988, see Jacob M. Landau, *The Arab Minority in Israel, 1967-1991, Political Aspects* (Oxford 1993), pp. 131-161. Likud united the parties of Herut, Liberal, La'Am and the Free Center; Shinui, established for the elections of 1977, united for the elections of 1992 with MAPAM and RATZ in a list called MERETZ. MAPAI united with other parties throughout the Israeli elections to become the Israel Labor Party (ILP).

[104] Information on these meetings based on personal communications with several elders who attended them; there may have been more than 20 meetings; see also *al-Yaum*, 26 November 1951, 9 December 1951, 9 January 1952, 10 and 18 August 1952.

[105] AS FM 2402//22, Amin Tarif to the Prime Minister and RM, undated letter

In an attempt to promote the project, Palmon wrote to the Custodian of Absentees' Property:

> I know that the lands of the village Hittin have been given to the Jewish settlement in the area for cultivation. I think that it would be desirable to give the site of the shrine and the couple of buildings and a small portion of land around it to the Druze community. This action can strengthen the ties of the Druze community to the state of Israel.[106]

No Druze soldiers, however, were ever settled in Hittin nor was any "small portion of land" ever made over to the community.

Sheikh Amin Tarif's request coincided with the first attempts to delegitimize his religious supremacy. Since in the early years of the state he had had his reservations about recruiting Druzes to the IDF, by bringing up the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb Sheikh Amin may simply have wanted to demonstrate where his influence was greatest. Whereas his opponents had to rely on the support of Palmon, the Adviser of the Prime Minister, and Yanai, from the Druze Unit of the IDF, Sheikh Amin could rely for his leadership on the Druze community. Following the elections of 1951 Abba Hushi began reinforcing his relations with Sheikh Amin Tarif and other Druze chiefs in an effort to recoup some of the terrain he had lost to Palmon and others when they deprived him of the monopoly he had held since the 1930s in Druze affairs. Perhaps this was also due to the inability of Amin Tarif's opponents to raise the number of Druze recruits for the IDF—by 1953 the voluntary service of Druzes in IDF seems to have considerably slackened.[107] In 1956, Abba Ḥushi, with the aid and advice of Sheikh Amin Tarif, took the place of the army officers in the invitations to and the preparations for the *ziyara* to *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb.*[108]

In early June 1953, the IDF's staff issued an order, called "the Recruitment Joint B of reserve soldiers among the Druze com-

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(likely to have been sent in October 1949). The letter is written in good Hebrew, probably by one of the Israeli officials, witness also the use of the Hebrew name "Jethro" for the Arabic "*Shu'ayb.*"

[106] Ibid., Palmon to FM, RM, the Custodian of Absentees' Property, 27 October 1949.

[107] Salih, p. 216. I had difficulty in getting figures on this military issue, and carried out my own field survey. Only about 25 volunteers were recruited from the Druze villages between January 1950 and June 1953.

[108] In 1956 military service became obligatory for the Druze community; see below.

munity" to the Israeli army. The term "Joint B" probably suggests that it was to be seen as a follow-up of the recruitment of 1948. It is unclear who was behind this new recruitment effort, but it may well have been Palmon himself who transmitted the order to Yanai as Commander of the Minorities Unit. It seems that since 1948, apart from Druzes from the Jabal, who continued to join the army since they had no land to cultivate, no more than a few dozen Druzes of the Galilee and the Carmel had joined up. As in 1948 and again later in 1956, executing such orders could be achieved only with the cooperation of the clan chiefs. On 7 June a meeting was held in the headquarters of the Minorities Unit at Nesher where forty chiefs were present.

> In general the response was positive and full assistance was promised. But, eventually, when the practical operation of enlisting the soldiers began, it became clear that a certain part of the community chiefs rejected the matter, and refrained from giving their men and even conducted open propaganda against the recruitment.[109]

The description Yanai gives here of the system of the recruitment, especially when he speaks of the chiefs and "their" men, is highly reminiscent of the feudal system and the loyalty his men owed a feudal lord.

As in previous cases the first village to begin the second enlistment was 'Isfiya, where Sheikh Labib firmly supported it. On 17 June, however, Sheikh Amin Tarif's brother arrived with a clear message not to support the new recruitment effort and the same day visited Daliat al-Carmel with the same message. "The same was done in Buqay'a, Hurfaysh and other villages. He also exercised religious pressure by threatening the recruits with a religious ban." Salih Khnayfis, Labib Abu Rukun and their allies in the Druze villages succeeded in convincing two hundred men to join up. But "the men of Sheikh Amin and Sheikh Jabr in many villages did not provide anyone. In 'Isfiya no one from Najib Mansur's men enlisted." This repeated itself in all other villages. Referring to the arguments of the chiefs who refused to participate in this campaign of recruitment, Yanai indicates that most of them declared that they accepted the Israeli step in principle, but rejected the way of recruitment as it was carried out by the Druze-Jewish coalitions opposed to the Tarif faction. For example, the Tarif

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[109] AS FM/2402/28, Yanai to Palmon, 15 October 1953.

chiefs conditioned their acceptance of the recruitment on having the Jewish officers of the Minorities Unit replaced by others; Najib Mansur refused to collaborate with the mobilizers "as long as the dispute among the chiefs continues"; for Jabr Mu'addi it was enough if Yanai would meet him at "Abba Hushi's house for a short discussion over a cup of coffee as a condition for the recruitment of his men." According to Yanai Jabr's motivations "differed from" those of the Tarifs in that the latter feared the repercussions of the recruitment on the political situation of the Druzes in the overall Arab world. Yanai quoted Salman Tarif as saying: "The problem of the recruitment by voluntary [not by conscription] law is a delicate political problem and has an important impact abroad [in the Arab world]."[110]

Even though Salman Tarif may have been hinting that things would be different if conscription was to be made obligatory by law, the position of the Tarif clan in general and of Sheikh Amin Tarif in particular was seen by many ordinary Druzes as genuine and not subject to change, and it was this attitude that encouraged the clan chiefs to oppose the authorities' drive for further military service among the Druze community. Many of them already found themselves on the defensive in the power game played out in their villages. In Shafa'amr Sheikh Salman Nasr Sa'd and the Nakad family were up against Salih Khnayfis. In 'Isfiya, the Mansur chiefs, the most loyal supporters of Amin Tarif, had been defeated by Labib Abu Rukun in the first local elections. That Abu Rukun had succeeded only because he had the backing of Palmon, Yanai, Yitah and Zayd showed once again that in order to remain in the game, one needed Jewish "sponsors." As earlier the Tarifs and Mu'addi, the Mansurs now found Abba Hushi ready to play this role. As one of the first Jews to have contacted the Druzes and seeing himself as one of the "specialists" in the internal affairs of the community, Abba Hushi was of the opinion that only through Sheikh Amin Tarif's leadership, and by reconciling the two opposing factions, could the Israeli authorities win optimal influence among the Druzes. Thus, after the elections in 'Isfiya at the beginning of 1953, Abba Hushi tried to work out a reconciliation between Labib Abu Rukun, the first elected head of the local council, and Najib

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110 Ibid.

Mansur suggesting that the latter be appointed as deputy to the former.[111] Labib Abu Rukun, however, did not want to hear about any of this and rejected the suggestion.[112]

Backed by Yanai, Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khanyfis now set out to portray the dispute between the Druze clans as between loyalists and enemies of Israel. The recruitment drive and the offensive of Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis against Sheikh Amin Tarif began in June, two months after the *ziyara* to *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* where the Tarifs had been able to rally their supporters in defense of their position and to demonstrate to the Israelis that genuine influence among the Druzes belonged to them.[113]

To counteract their efforts and since the next *ziyara* at *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* was a long way off, Sheikh Amin Tarif used the alternative of the *ziyara* to *maqam al-nabi Sabalān* near the Druze village of Hurfaysh on 17 September. Hundreds of sheikhs responded positively to Sheikh Amin's invitation and an official permit from the Military Governor of the northern district was obtained. When the sheikhs were already gathering at the site, however, the Military Governor revoked the permission and told the Druze sheikhs he would not let the *ziyara* go ahead "for reasons of security." Frustrated, the sheikhs addressed a petition to the President of the state and to the Minister of Religions accusing the Military Governor of religious discrimination. According to the petitioners, visits to *maqam al-nabi Sabalān* had been a custom dating back to Ottoman times and would take place annually on 17 September; even during the first years of the Israeli state this visit had never been prohibited. "The authorities' treatment we consider as a calculated and pre-meditated blow intended to lower our image in the eyes of others.... The treatment and intentions of the authorities and the results of their actions do not go well with the democratic principles of the State of Israel." Sheikh Amin and the other Druze sheikhs demanded an immediate investigation into the incident,[114] claiming that at the bottom of the hostile attitude

[111] AHA A/13, Abba Hushi's secretary to Labib Abu Rukun, 11 March 1953.

[112] Ibid., Labib Abu Rukun to Abba Hushi, 16 March 1953.

[113] At the beginning of 1953, the Israeli government allocated money for rebuilding the *maqam* and Sheikh Amin invited sheikhs to the laying of the cornerstone for a new building there on 24 February 1953.

[114] AS FM/2402/28, Hebrew translation of a petition of Druze sheikhs to the President of the State of Israel (September 1953).

of the authorities lay the interfering behavior of Yanai and Salih Khnayfis.[115]

The Druze petition received a response from both the Adviser for Minorities Affairs and the Ministry of Religions. One of Palmon's assistants, B. Yekutieli, rejected all accusations that his Office and others had intervened in the decision of the Military Governor. To the Tarifs, he wrote: "Concerning your religious meetings, in the future ... you should be in touch with the Military Governor of the Galilee."[116] With the date of the *ziyara* gone by, Sheikh Amin persisted until November in his right to conduct the visit to the shrine even with this delay.[117] The Ministry of Religions suggested as a compromise that permits be given for individual visits to the site to be spread out over three days instead of a one-day mass meeting at the site.[118] The Office of the Adviser rejected any compromise claiming that the area of the shrine was "a Muslim *waqf*... of which individuals from the Druze community are recently trying to take control so as to transform it into a Druze *waqf*."[119]

It is clear from the above incident that government policy towards the Druzes was determined neither by the Foreign Ministry nor the Ministry of Religions but that the affairs of the community were completely in the hands of two institutions, the Druze Unit in the IDF and the Office of the Adviser for Minorities Affairs, whose primary aim was to further the ties with the Druze community on the sole basis of military service. Both Yanai and Yekutieli were convinced that the incident sprang from the recruitment campaign in the Druze villages and from the internal dispute within the Druze community that had been further sharpened by it. While Yanai had been among those Israelis who had first suggested taking advantage of the *ziyara* to the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb for political purposes, he now sought to deprive Sheikh Amin from using it in the same manner. In a detailed letter on the incident of the *ziyara* to Nabi Sabalan, Yanai wrote to the Adviser:

> (1) The pilgrimage [*ziyara*] to Nabi Sabalan was never a permanent

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[115] Ibid., Yanai to the Office of the Advisor for Minorities Affairs, 11 October 1953.

[116] Ibid., Yekutieli to Salman Tarif, 12 October 1953.

[117] Ibid., Shamai Cahana, Secretary of FM, to the RM, 18 November 1953.

[118] Ibid., Office of the Military Governor to RM, 27 October 1953, Ya'cov Yoshua' from the Muslim and Druze Section of RM to FM, 22 November 1953.

[119] Ibid., Yekutieli to FM, 9 November 1953.

pilgrimage fixed to a specific day and was never a common visit of sheikhs from several villages. Like many places in the Galilee, this site served individuals and small families as a place for *nizr*s (sacrifices). (2) The first attempt to transform it into a permanent and fixed event was made one year ago, by Sheikh Amin Tarif. (3) The attempt by Sheikh Amin Tarif to establish for himself a fixed congregation of religious people was done to exploit it for political reasons under the disguise of religious rituals, despite his claims ... that religious men do not interfere in politics, but he himself energetically engages in it. (4) The meeting of this year in Nabi Sabalan was undoubtedly destined for propaganda purposes related to the internal dispute which had broken out within the community in respect of the religious leadership and the supervision over the money of the religious endowments [*waqf*]... 5) Concerning the claims of Sheikh Amin Tarif that the incident was provoked at the instigation of Amnon Yanai, Sasson and Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, as far as I know Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi and Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, who are known chiefs of rival factions in the community, addressed the issue to the Military Governor who justifiably had to take their suggestions with the utmost seriousness.[120]

In his efforts to obtain a permit to conduct the *ziyara* Sheikh Amin Tarif, while waiting for a response from the Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, whom he had asked to see, is alleged even to have sought access to the British and UN representatives in Israel in order to complain to them about the "intervention of the authorities" in the religious affairs of the Druzes.[121] Prompted by the Adviser, Salih Khnayfis and Jabr Mu'addi, the two Druze Members of the Knesset (MK), thereupon also requested an interview with Sharett, Jabr Mu'addi temporarily having made up with Salih Khnayfis. In a letter to the secretary of the Minister sent ten days before the two planned meetings with Tarif and the MKs, the Adviser's Office explained: "The motivations of such requests [to see the Minister] are the desire of the two sides to present their points of view in regard to the divergence of opinions that have erupted among the Druze community between the several factions in order to gain supporters [on the Jewish side]." In an attempt to influence the Minister, Yekutieli then gave a historical summary of Druze-Jewish relations describing Sheikh Amin's faction as anti-Israeli:

Since the war of independence and before, two approaches towards the Jewish Yishuv [the pre-State settlement] and then towards the

[120] Ibid., Yanai to the Advisor for Minorities Affairs, 11 October 1953.

[121] Ibid., Report, "Among the Druzes," unsigned (that it was classified as top secret suggests that this was a Shin Bet report), 3 November 1953.

> state can be recognized among the Druze community. The one is represented by MK Salih Khnayfis of Shafa'amr and Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun of 'Isfiya, who raised high the banner of cooperation with the Jews.... From among the circles around these two people came the Druze volunteers to the IDF. During the war the second approach was represented by Sheikh Amin Tarif and his circles, who held back their support of the state as long as it remained unclear whether Israel would come out on top. These circles renewed their reservations towards Israel or at least have taken a cautious and ambiguous position during the previous two years, in order not to burn the bridges that connect them with the Arabs of Israel and the neighboring countries. In this approach and position one should seek the source of the latter's recent opposition to the recruitment of the Druzes into the IDF. The first group has continued to support the recruitment of the Druzes into the IDF constantly with no reservation whatsoever.[122]

In his diaries, after he had met the two delegations, Moshe Sharett refers to the "Druze factions" much along the lines of the Advisers' comments on the Druze leaders:

> Amin Tarif impresses one as the religious leader of the community; Sheikh Jabr (Mu'addi) who is known [to us since the Mandate], is an MK, and (Hasan Salih) Khnayfis also is an MK. In a time of heated dispute [within the community], these latter, though "yellow" (suspicious) of each other, reached an agreement against the former. Where honest loyalty to the state is concerned, these two are of the first rank while the elder Amin Tarif of Julis is squinting towards the Druzes on the other side of the border (Syria and Lebanon) and advises the members of his community not to destroy the bridges with the Arab world by further submission to Israel.[123]

Of his meeting with Sheikh Amin Tarif's delegation, which took place on 5 November, Sharett describes the warm discussion he held with this "elder," though his loyalty to the state was still uncertain, while nineteen days later, after he had met with the two "yellow" allies, Sharett describes the situation as "causing [him] giddiness."[124] Clear is that Sharett at the time did not consider Sheikh Amin as overall leader of the community.

This position was similar to that of the Adviser as phrased by Yekutieli in his report, i.e., the Druze community had no single religious leader, but Sheikh Amin was making attempts not only

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[122] Ibid., Yekutieli to the Secretary of the FM, 23 October 1953.

[123] Moshe Sharett, *Yoman Ishi* ("Personal Diary") (Tel Aviv 1978), vol. 2, pp. 120.

[124] Ibid., p. 191.

to dominate the religious leadership but to reach a dominant position also in the political and public affairs of the community. Sheikh Amin's opposition to Druze recruitment and his ambitions to control the *waqf* had introduced a deep split in the Druze community. In order to stop further frictions harmful to Israeli interests, Yekutieli proposed to "legalize the communal-religious organization of the community by law." He suggested to the Foreign Minister not to agree to meeting the Druzes but to direct them to "the Defence Minister on the question of the recruitment into the IDF and the Minister of Minorities Affairs on the question of the organization."[125]

After Sheikh Amin and his brother Salman met with Sharett and possibly also the Minister of Defence, the issue of Druze recruitment disappeared from the agenda of the Tarif family. The question of the final organization of the community had to wait until 1956-57, when it was legalized by law. The events of summer and autumn 1953 taught many chiefs that it was better to adapt to the situation than to resist, notably when the Shin Bet began "interfering" in the internal dispute and the recruitment of the Druzes into the IDF. As one of the "top secret" reports at the beginning of November, i.e., prior to the meeting of Sheikh Amin with the Ministers, has it:

> In the last two months the situation in the Druze community has become acute, and the dispute between the community's factions has reached a new climax with the recruitment of the Druzes to the IDF.... The motive of the dispute is personal and clannish, and a number of men are vying for power over the community. At the heart of the dispute lie the attitude vis-à-vis the state and the position of the community between Israel and the Arab [world]. This friction has deepened since the second Knesset elections when two separate lists appeared within the community—one of Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, who was supported by Palmon and the Commander of the Minorities Unit (and by the Druzes Labib Abu Rukun of 'Isfiya, Sheikh Farhan Tarif of Julis and Sheikh Quftan 'Azzam al-Halabi of Daliat al-Carmel), the second of Sheikh Jaber Dahish Mu'addi, who was supported by Abba Hushi (and among the Druzes by the religious Sheikh Amin Tarif, his brother Salman Tarif and Sheikh Najib Mansur).... The rivals... exploited the recruitment issue in order to establish themselves towards the inside, and to secure for themselves (and for their Jewish supporters) a position of dominance that would have all the power

[125] AS FM/2402/28, Yekutieli to the FM, 23 October 1953.

within the community, and so to win recognition with the authorities as the "decision makers" among the Druzes.[126]

## *A "Top Secret" Report*

Since the detailed information contained in this secret report so clearly reflects the image Israeli officials had created for themselves of the Druze community, in general, and of the Druze chiefs with whom they had been dealing since the 1930s, in particular, it may be worthwhile to look at it a bit further. The report singles out as the one core issue the position of the chiefs towards recruitment in the reserve army, and knows how to differentiate between the positions of Sheikh Amin and his brother Salman Tarif. In a communal meeting, the former had allegedly declared that "a recruitment to the IDF introduces our youth to bad values; the service of the Druzes in the IDF is a blot on the name of the community in the Arab countries; in time of war Israel will place the Druzes within the firing line." Such words were bound to rile the Israeli officials and their Druze allies. Reportedly in an attempt to improve Amin Tarif's image in the eyes of the officials, Salman Tarif accompanied by some supporters held a press conference in mid-October 1953 in which he denied that the Druze religious sheikhs "reject the conscription into the IDF, they are loyal to the state and ready to support the conscription, on condition that the Minorities Unit's commanders who are implicated in *fasad* [spreading gossip and intrigues] and allied with one part of the community be removed from their posts."[127]

Prompted apparently by Yanai and Shin Bet agents, Amin Tarif's opponents immediately thereafter also held a press conference where they "displayed the nationalist past of Sheikh Amin Tarif and how he had opposed the Jewish Yishuv, emphasizing that his position towards conscription bears witness to his position towards the state of Israel." They were especially contemptuous of Sheikh Amin Tarif's conduct concerning the *waqf*, and demanded to see a financial report on the money expended on the new buildings of *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb*. Summarizing the situation as it viewed it at the beginning of November, the report noticed that the Tarif

[126] Ibid., Report, "Among the Druzes," 3 November 1953.
[127] Ibid.

faction was looking for a compromise: "Sensing that they went too far, [the Tarifs] sought a way of retreat. They formally addressed themselves to the department of the Military Governor informing him that they were ready to go along with recruitment, if the existing 'system' were to be replaced."[128]

This backtracking of the Tarifs vis-à-vis Druze recruitment in 1953, the urgent demands for more recruitments as voiced by the Tarif opposition and the reservations Sheikh Amin kept raising concerning the "bad values," were to become, in 1956, the basis of a compromise formula which enabled the Druze chiefs to accept the introduction of an obligatory conscription law. In order to satisfy Sheikh Amin where Druze values were concerned, it was agreed that the Druze '*uqqal*s would be exempted from military service. In this way the law of 1956 allowed the Tarifs to avert all suspicion on the part of Druzes opposed to conscription that Sheikh Amin was in any way associated with Khnayfis, Abu Rukun and Jabr Mu'addi. The latter, of course, were strongly in favor of obligatory conscription for the Druzes. As we saw above, Salman Tarif had already hinted at the significance of the difference between voluntary and obligatory conscription.[128]

The report further depicts only Abu Rukun and Khnayfis as genuine in their support of Druze conscription. Dipping into the past record of Khnayfis, the report explained how he had shifted his political stance since 1938:

> Salih Khnayfis ... aged 42 ... member of a good family but not notable enough to grant him leadership by virtue of his ancestors. He has no real hamula backing, and his main power stems form the extent of the support which he elicits from the authorities and from the way he exploits the personal rivalries within the community. Deep within his heart he is religious ... and hides the sympathy he has for Amin Tarif. In the Mandatory period he was prominent as a moderate, though he took part in the Arab-nationalist movement. Following his father's death by members of the "gangs" [the term by which the Israelis denote Palestinian fighters since the Arab Revolt of 1936], he contacted the Jews and became involved in land deals of the Jewish National Fund. During the war of independence, he became the most prominent figure among the pro-Israeli Druzes and brought some of his friends into contact with the IDF, among them Sheikh Jabr Dahish.

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[128] Ibid.

Typical, too, is the way the report describes the position of the latter:

> Aged 32, Sheikh Jabr ... is one of the chiefs of the Mu'addi family who among the Druzes are considered as one of the notable families.... He has the natural characteristics of the Oriental "leader," he is crafty, an embroiderer of conspiracies, pursuer of power, and quarrelsome. He is known by the Druzes to be brave and cruel, capable of murder without hesitation. On this ground, he [has been able to] buy his world among the Druzes through intimidation. With his own hands he has murdered a couple of men and women, among them his sixteen-year-old sister and he has even been imprisoned. During the Mandatory period he appeared as Arab-nationalist. Influenced by Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, during the war of the independence, he approached the IDF. Even then he did not entirely stop his relations with the Arab forces. Sheikh Jabr is known as a friend of the [Syrian] tyrant, Shishakli; he is suspected of being in touch with the Syrians, though there is no evidence of this.[129]

### *The Circle Closes: Compulsory Conscription*

By the end of November the Druze chiefs had succeeded in recruiting about two hundred soldiers for the IDF reserve forces. While the campaign for recruitment and the disputes it gave rise to occupied not only the chiefs but also many others of the Druze community,[130] news of the attacks of Shishakli against Jabal al-Duruz began coming in, effectively postponing the internal rivalries of the chiefs, notably between Sheikh Amin and his relative Farhan Tarif on the one hand and between Jabr and his relative Marzuq Mu'addi on the other.

Not long after the coup d'état of the Free Officers in Egypt had sent shockwaves of excitement throughout the Arab Middle East and led to a resurgence of Arab nationalist feelings, a vital propaganda tool was found in radio broadcasts. Several stations were soon broadcasting in the region and began reshaping public opinion also among Israel's Arabs. Israel radio did not want to stay behind and broadcast a declaration, in the form of a letter ostensibly addressed to Israel's Prime Minster and signed by the Druze chiefs, protesting against the "brutalities" of Shishakli and

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[129] Ibid.

[130] AS FM/2401/19B, Report of the Military Governor's Department, January-February 1954.

the Syrian government. The vocabulary it uses and the way it is phrased are evidence that the declaration was written by someone well acquainted with propaganda methods, and reflected the official Israeli viewpoint which sought not only to encourage the communal particularism of the Druzes but also—in a calculated move—to reshape these particularist feelings into nationalist ones:[131]

> The actions of Shishlakli are in contravention of international custom and law which guarantee the rights of the national minorities in every country... As we condemn them we are astonished how Shishakli and his government, which is represented ... in the United Nations, can allow itself to violate these international principles and laws.... We beg the Israeli government to make contact with those foreign countries that have an influence on Syria, and with the United Nations and the Security Council in order to explain the dangers of Shishakli's aggressive acts against the Druze nation.[132]

Because Shishakli's attacks on the Jabal had such deep repercussions among the Druzes throughout the Middle East, talk of "national minority" and of "national rights" being protected by international law did not at this moment elicit much protest from those Druzes who had become critical of moves to separate the Druzes, as if they were not Arabs but formed a "nation" of their own. (The debate between these first secular-educated Druzes, who had adopted Arabism, and traditional Druze particularists over what constituted "Druze identity" would erupt in earnest later in the year—comparisons between their own situation and that of the Druzes in Syria would play an important part.[133]) Geared to the Druzes in Israel itself but also to those in Lebanon and Syria, with whom no direct contact existed since the war of 1948, and given the military rule with which Israel was governing its own national minorities, the radio message, of course, was a classic piece of pure propaganda.

Throughout January 1954, almost all Druze villages on the Carmel and in the Galilee held demonstrations in support of the Druzes of Syria and against the aggression of Shishakli, mobilizing the

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[131] During this period the Israeli radio and press began using the terms "Arabs and Druzes" to denote the minorities in Israel. Also, in 1954 an Arabic translation of part of Ben Zvi's writing on the Druzes by Kamal al-Qāsim was brought out (see above, Introduction, n. 3).

[132] AS FM/2402/28, Sheikhs Amin Tarif, 'Abdalla Khayr, Kamal Mu'aḍdi, Salih Khnayfis, Jabr Mu'addi, Labib Abu Rukun, Quftan 'Azzam, and Farhan Tarif (January 1954).

[133] See Nabih al-Qāsim, *Waqiʿ al-Duruz fi Israil* (Jerusalem 1976), pp. 29-44.

community in the traditional way of lighting bonfires on mountain tops which through the ages had signaled danger and the need to close ranks.[134] The Israeli press and radio expressed solidarity with the Druze community and some of the officials even raised the idea of establishing "a public committee for the Druzes." But by the end of the month hostilities in the Jabal had ceased and the idea became irrelevant. In the words of Moshe Sharett at the time:

> This is an interesting idea, but after reflections and consultations with others I have come to the conclusion that such [a committee] no longer matters.... We have already raised a lot of publicity for the matter, and it is desirable to stop now so as in the very least not to arouse—or encourage—the impression that we are not honest in this incitement, but are exploiting for our own benefit the persecutions of the Druzes in order to condemn Shishakli.[135]

During the same period there was an increase in the number of infiltrations by Palestinians into Israel. Unlike in 1948-1950, these were mainly guerrilla actions, and were making quite an impact on Israeli public opinion. Jabr Mu'addi, who six months earlier had refused to "recruit his men" into the army, now not only initiated such recruitment but demanded that a special Druze militia be established which was to be in charge of dealing with these infiltrations.[136] The timing of his suggestion, when Israeli public opinion had grown very sensitive to the casualties inflicted by the guerrilla raids, would bridge the gap between him and the Office of the Adviser and others who had been critical of his position vis-à-vis the recruitment the year before. In addition, the experience of 1953 had taught Sheikh Amin Tarif to be cautious with the Israeli authorities when it came to security issues. With the opposition of Tarif to the recruitment out of the way, the entire Druze community in Israel thrown into turmoil by Shishakli's aggressive actions in Syria, and with Palestinian infiltrations intensifying, the time seemed ripe to some Israeli officials to turn conscription from voluntary into compulsory.[137]

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[134] Throughout their history the Druzes used bonfire signals to mobilize the whole community in time of wars and revolts. January 1954 was the very last time they took recourse to this device.

[135] AS FM/2402/28, FM to Dr. 'A. Carlbach, 4 February 1954.

[136] AS FM 2401/19B, Report of the Military Governor's Department, January-February 1954.

[137] Sharett, *Yoman Ishi*, vol. 2 (7 February 1954), p. 338. 138. AHA, 13/A, Abba Ḥushi to Minister of Agriculture, 22 March 1954.

Compulsory conscription for the Druzes became official policy in 1956. During the intervening period no disputes reigned between the Druze chiefs on the issue. Instead, trying to shore up their positions as clan chiefs, they continued vying among themselves in proving their loyalty to the authorities. That they thereby appeared completely indifferent to the problems their own villagers confronted in everyday life reveals the measure of success the Israelis were having with their policy of encouraging Druze "particularism." There is no trace, for example, in either archival material or oral testimonies of rival chiefs ever intervening to stop the confiscation by the authorities of village lands, which was the order of the day especially after the Land Law of 1953 introduced different categories so as to facilitate legalizing the process.

In February 1954 representatives of the State Properties Office came to the area called al-Mansura, which belonged to the village of Mghar, to inform the peasants there that 500 dunams of "Block 155565" were actually state property by law since the peasants working these lands had never bothered to register them during the Mandatory period. In fact, until 1933 the area of al-Mansura had been *musha'*, collective property. In 1940 the peasants had dissolved this collective ownership and distributed the area between themselves before the official registrar, all according to law. In 1944 these lands came under the category of "disputed lands," which meant that they were temporarily in the custody of the British High Commissioner while the peasants continued to cultivate them as before. After the establishment of the Jewish state the peasants tried, in vain, to obtain official recognition that these properties were rightfully theirs—in 1954 they became state land.

Al-Mansura is only one of the many examples of the way in which, since prior to the outbreak of the war they had been categorized as "disputed," Arab Palestinian villages lost most of their lands. The other two main problems that severely affected life at the grassroots level were education and employment.

CHAPTER FOUR

# PLOWSHARES INTO SWORDS

That by the early 1950s a clear distinction had been created between the Druzes and the other Arabs in Israel where political matters were concerned is underscored by the many official government reports and documents the historian has access to. That distinction, however, goes by the board when it comes to economic and demographic issues—expropriation by the state of Arab land, agricultural production, employment, etc. Here Israeli policy makers approach and deal with the Arab minorities as one group. Because of the thirty-year secrecy act, archival documents used in this study go no further than the mid-1960s, but if we look for example at the *Statistical Abstracts of Israel* (*SAI*) we find that, whether on agriculture, industry, infrastructure or education, as late as 1987 uniform policies applied to all "non-Jewish" (i.e., Muslim, Christian, Druze) communities,[1] even though—as we will see below—the large percentage of Druzes enlisted in the Israeli army and security services forced upon the community a particular form of "integration" into the Jewish economy.

Between 1949 and 1955 official policy toward the state's Arab population, the Druzes among them, showed two contradictory features. By extending loans, setting up cooperatives, providing know-how and so on, much was done to stimulate agriculture, primarily because during these early years of the state the Arab peasant farmer's produce was vital for the Jewish market. Simultaneously, however, an increasingly sophisticated legal apparatus was put in place to underpin a relentless land acquisition program aimed at turning as much land owned by Arabs into state (in Zionist parlance, "national") land. Expropriation was aided by the economic hardships of the 1950s which drove many Arab peasant farmers to abandon agriculture altogether and seek employment elsewhere, prohibitive taxes on untilled land gradually forcing them into selling part or all of the plots they owned.

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[1] In 1987 budget allocations to the Druze (but not to the other Arab) villages and local councils were made to equal those that went to Jewish settlements and municipalities.

In June 1949, after consultations with Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, Zalman Lifshitz, an official of the Jewish National Fund (JNF, Heb.: *Keren Kayemet le-Israel*),[2] called together a number of officials from the various departments and institutions involved in "minorities" and land affairs in order to formulate "one common policy on the acquisition of lands from the Arabs." Present were, among others, Yehoshua Palmon, the Prime Minister's Adviser on Minorities Affairs, Yosef Weitz, Director of the JNF's Land Department and chairman of the "Council for the Rehabilitation of Israeli Arab Refugees," and a representative of the JNF.[3]

The main policy questions they set out to solve were (1) the future status of "absentee property"; (2) acquisition of land owned by foreign citizens and institutions, e.g., those run by the Churches of the various Christian denominations that had been active in Palestine since the nineteenth century; (3) land purchases from Arab refugees; and (4) and (5) land acquisition programs directed at the country's Arab citizens in the Galilee and the Triangle. As Lifshitz saw it, "[i]t is urgent to reach a common policy about these and similar matters and to make sure all bodies involved in land acquisition...stick to this [one policy]."[4]

Priority was given to the matter of "absentees properties," especially after the *New York Herald Tribune* published an article alleging that an agreement had been signed between the government of Israel and the JNF on the sale to the latter of one million dunam of "absentees property," that is, land belonging to Palestinians who had fled or had been expelled from the areas the Israeli army had succeeded in occupying by mid-1949. The international com-

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[2] The activities of the Jewish National Fund date back to 1907 while in 1920 the Palestine Foundation Fund (*Keren Hayesod*) was created. By then, the "political importance of land acquisition [had] established the fundamental principle of Zionist land policy 'that all land on which Jewish colonisation takes place should eventually become the common property of the Jewish People'"—Barbara J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine* (Syracuse 1993), p. 89.

[3] Weitz and Lifshitz had been in contact since the early 1940s and were both active supporters of "transfer" ideas: "Among ourselves it must be clear that there is no room for both peoples in this small country. ...the only solution is the Land of Israel ... There is no room for compromise on this point! ... and there is no way besides transferring the Arabs from here to the neighboring countries, to transfer them all." Weitz's diary entry for 22 June 1941 as quoted by Israel Shahak, "A History of the Concept of 'Transfer' in Zionism," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18/3 (71; 1989), pp. 22-37 (quote on p. 26); see also Benny Morris, *1948 and After*, pp. 89-144.

[4] AS FM 2402/5, Lifshitz to Ben Gurion, 17 June 1949.

munity still expected that with the end of hostilities there should be a settlement of the refugee problem the war had created, including repatriation or compensation. The internal debate the *New York Herald Tribune* article evoked[5] shows that not until March 1950, with the enactment of the Absentees' Property Law, 1950, did Israeli officials succeed in putting together a "common policy" on expropriating Arab-owned land. Curiously, the Absentees' Property Law affected not only the more than 650,000 Palestinian refugees but also many of the 150,000 or so Arabs now living within the borders of Israel. "Absentee" is defined in Section 1 of the law as follows:

(b) "absentee" means—

1. (1) a person who, at any time during the period between the 16th Kislev, 5708 (29 November 1947) and the day on which a declaration is published, under section 9(d) of the Law and Administration Ordinance, (5708-1948) that the state of emergency declared by the Provisional Council of State on the 10th of Iyar, 5708 (19th May, 1948) has ceased to exist, was the legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held it, whether by himself or through another, and who at any time during the said period—
   (i) was a national or citizen of the Lebanon, Egypt, Syria, Saudi-Arabia, Trans-Jordan, Iraq or the Yemen or
   (ii) was in one of these countries or in any part of Palestine outside the area of Israel or
   (iii) was a Palestinian citizen and left his ordinary place of residence in Palestine
   (a) for a place outside Palestine before the 27th Av, 5708 (1 September 1948); or
   (b) for a place in Palestine held at the time by forces which sought to prevent the establishing of the State of Israel or which fought against it after its establishment;

   (2) a body of persons which, at any time during the period specified in paragraph (1), was a legal owner of any property situated in the area of Israel or enjoyed or held such property, whether by itself or through another, and all the

[5] Ibid., M. Kuni to FM, 16 August 1949, Dr. A. Granot to FM, 28 August 1949. What especially irked the people involved was that the information had been given to the *New York Herald Tribune* by an Israeli official—discussed were possible repercussions on the international community and the nature of the agreement with the JNF; in correspondence with the FM officials claimed that the deal did not mean that the JNF obtained legal ownership of absentees' property since on the future of these lands the goverment had as yet to make a decision.

> members, partners, shareholders, directors or managers of which are absentees within the meaning of paragraph (1) or the management of the business of which is otherwise decisively controlled by such absentees, or all the capital of which is in the hands of such absentees.

The upshot of this definition was that people who were very much present in "Israel" could still have their property declared "absentees' property"—Zionist "newspeak" even created a term for them: "present absentees."[6]

To speed up the confiscation process, that same year a Development Authority was created by law, which was followed in March 1953 by the Land Acquisitions Law (Validations of Acts and Compensation). The latter came to "validate" acts whereby in the course of the 1948 war Arab lands had been expropriated so-to-speak on the spot (for military purposes or to serve the expansion of Jewish settlement) as follows:

> 2. (a) Property in respect of which the Minister certifies by certificate under his hand—
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> (1) that on the 6th Nisan, 5712 (1 April 1952) it was not in the possession of its owners; and
> (2) that within the period between the 5th Iyar, 5708 (14 May 1948) and the 6th Nisan, 5712 (1 April 1952) it was used or assigned for purposes of essential development, settlement or security; and
>
> (3) that it is still required for any of these purposes—
>
> shall vest in the Development Authority and be regarded as free from any charge, and the Development Authority may forthwith take possession thereof.

The law fixed a certain time period within which the acquisition had to be completed but whenever it turned out that more time was needed the Knesset at the request of the Development Authority usually extended the deadline without much ado. Most Arabs within Israel lost part or all of their lands through this law, though the majority of lands thus expropriated was "absentee"-owned.

The government further fell back on a Mandatory Ordinance

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[6] English text of the Absentees' Property Law and the Land Acquisitions Law (see below) taken from David Kretzmer, *The Legal Status of the Arabs in Israel* (Boulder, Colorado, 1987), pp. 55-60; Kretzmer quotes a figure of 75,000 for the number of Arabs whom the law turned into such "present absentees."

of 1943 ("Acquisition for Public Purposes") authorizing the Ministry of Finance to expropriate land required for public development projects, and on a 1928 Land (Settlement of Title) Ordinance making it possible to register in the name of the state any land for which no claimant had come forward. The State Property Law of 1951 turned into state ("national") land all properties of those villages that had registered their lands in the name of the British High Commissioner who was to function as temporary custodian, i.e., until their proper registration could be completed. The war of 1948 intervened, and these lands were transferred to the state of Israel—without the stipulation "on behalf of the village X." In 1958 came the Prescription Law which was largely based on the Ottoman Land Law (enacted exactly one hundred years earlier). According to Ottoman law, anyone who had been cultivating a plot of land for ten year could claim title to that land. The Prescription Law extended that period to fifteen years, meaning that Arab peasant farmers forfeited their right to land they had begun cultivating after 1 March 1943. Further strictures came in the form of the Security Law and the Emergency Law, both going back to emergency regulations of the Mandatory period, which gave the Military Governor the authority to severely limit the access of farmers to their lands because of "security considerations" and enabled the Defense Ministry to designate at will certain areas as "security zones," to which only the military had entrance. The Ministry of Agriculture, moreover, could take legal possession of lands lying fallow and of waste lands which then went to Jewish settlements in order to stimulate and increase Jewish agricultural production.[7]

When in early March 1953 the Land Acquisition Law was brought before the Knesset for approval, questions arose from the outset as to how loosely it should be interpreted and whether compensation to Arab peasant farmers should be given at all, while some left-wing Knesset members criticized the law for the wide-ranging powers it gave certain government departments. The debate in the Knesset, but even more so the adverse reactions to the law that appeared in the Western press, signaled to the officials in charge of "Arab affairs" that a certain amount of circumspection

[7] Ibid., pp. 171-189.

would not be amiss.[8] While the main task of the Development Authority remained implementing the various land laws and overseeing compensation issues, it was the Ministry of Finance, as one of the dominant actors, which decided to take matters in hand by establishing a committee that was to look more closely at, and then solve, the problems execution of the law gave rise to. It comprised the Director of the Development Authority, one M. Steiner, and representatives of the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Office of the Prime Minister's Adviser on Minorities Affairs, and of the JNF.[9] For the first period the Land Acquisition Law was implemented (1953-1954) it was Steiner's objective to seize 150,000 dunam in semi-abandoned Arab villages to be set aside for compensation purposes, and simultaneously to obtain from the JNF a sum of 1.8m IL for confiscated land the Fund bought from the government.[10] With Yosef Weitz, Yosef Nahmani, B. Yekutieli and Steiner himself the most prominent members present, the committee met for the first time on 18 October 1953 in the Jerusalem offices of the JNF in order to work out guidelines on how the Development Authority was to go about its task. They came up with the following:

> (1) Responsibility for implementing the law lies with the Development Authority; (2) Delegated to negotiate on behalf of the Development Authority with Arab landholders are Y. Nahmani, Z. Wolf and Y. Zuckerman; (3) There can only be negotiations on price and compensation where the Arab holder has legal proof of [title to] his property; (4) Cash compensation is always to be preferred, and in case the Arab holder wishes to leave the country the Development Authority should [encourage this and] provide compensation in foreign currency; (5) The JNF always has the possibility to [decide] not to use the law [when it wants] to acquire Arab land in areas designated by the law; (6) Arabs should preferably be compensated with lands that first need to be prepared so as to make them cultivatable; (7) Land given in compensation should be in existing villages so as to prevent new [Arab] villages from being established; (8) Land given in compensation should be allocated from absentees' properties.[11]

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[8] AS FM 2402/5, Y. Herzog to FM, 12 March 1953; Ministry of Information to FM, 15 April 1953.

[9] Ibid., Ministry of Finance to M. Auna, 14 June 1953.

[10] Ibid., Steiner to FM, 11 October 1953.

[11] For example if it wanted to acquire a plot of land lying within an area it already had in possession, the JNF could offer the owner in compensation a piece of land more conveniently located for him, which often meant one or two dunam

*"Man of the Galilee"*

In charge of the expropriation of Arab land in the Galilee was the person who for a full three decades, from 1935 till 1965, would be the director of the northern branch of the JNF, Yosef Nahmani. In the early 1930s Nahmani had been among that small band of Zionists who were seeking and cultivating ties with the Druze community. So as to try to win their support, in a pamphlet he had distributed among the Druzes of the Galilee Nahmani depicted the revolt that had just then broken out in terms of peasant farmers being manipulated by their landlords who felt threatened by the economic prosperity the Jews were bringing to the indigenous Arab population. Already then involved in land acquisition activities, Nahmani went out of his way to reassure the Druzes that the Jews had no intentions to infringe upon Druze ownership and that because of their "friendly relations" with the Zionists they could count on special treatment.[12] Nahmani carefully maintained his ties with a number of Druze chiefs in the Galilee whom he used, as he did other Arab chiefs, as intermediaries in his land deals. Starting in 1953, together with Weitz, he became the prime mover behind the so-called "judaization of the Galilee," a project that aimed (as it still does today) at settling as many Jews as possible in this characteristically Arab part of Israel.[13] In January, i.e., two months before the Knesset approved the Land Acquisition Law, he wrote to Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion that in view of the "Arab threat" many new Jewish settlements should be established there not only so as to create a Jewish majority in the Galilee but also to prevent the formation of a "nucleus of Arab nationalism within the Jewish state."[14]

On 1 April 1954, at one of the sessions of the committee for executing the 1953 law, Steiner presented the achievements of Nahmani, Wolf and Zuckerman over the intervening twelve months. After praising their hard work, Steiner informed the committee

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were given in exchange for twelve or even twenty; see ibid., "Summary of the Session of the Committee for the Execution of the Land Acquisition Law," 18 October 1953.

[12] Cf. Firro, *History*, pp. 329-330; see also Nahmani's own memoirs, Y. Nahmani, *Ish ha-Galil* (Man of the Galilee), (Ramat Gan 1969), pp. 91-93.

[13] In UN Partition Resolution 181 of 29 November 1947 the Galilee was designated to be incorporated in the Arab and not the Jewish state into which it divided Palestine.

[14] Nahmani, *Ish ha-Galil*, pp. 117-140, 134-135.

that 1,220,000 dunam of land had been acquired since the law had gone into effect:

> A third of this belonged to the absentees or suspected absentees. Through this operation the property of many areas whose ownership was in doubt has been acquired, something that will be very useful when it comes to arranging land settlement [compensation]. It should be noted that the Development Authority received much help from the Legal Advisor to the government, and the directors of the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance.

Steiner estimated that only a third of the land meanwhile acquired could be used in negotiations over compensation settlement.[15]

By April 1954, lands affected by the Israeli land laws in the villages inhabited by Druzes amounted to about 28,480 dunam. Bait Jan, Hurfaysh, and Sajur, which are entirely Druze, lost 18,590 dunam (Bait Jan 13,000, Hurfaysh 2,950, and Sajur 2,640). Even in mixed villages such as Shafa'amr (7,579 dunam), 'Isfiya (550 dunam) and Abu Snan (1,811 dunam), a large part of the lands affected belonged to Druzes.[16] By the late 1950s, with the Prescription Law of 1958, and the regular extensions of the 1953 law, virtually all Arab villages, including almost all Druze villages of the Galilee, had been affected and had lost large portions of their lands. Till today, villagers recount vivid stories about how they lost their lands through the active interference of Nahmani. The case of the village of Buqay'a is a good example of the way Nahmani went about his land acquisitions at that period. In a leaflet addressed to "public opinion in Israel," the inhabitants of the village protested:

> Buqay'a is a village with a population of 1,200 inhabitants, all of whom depend for their subsistence on agriculture and the cultivation of mountainous lands totaling 5,000 dunam.... Mr. Nahmani, the director of the JNF in the north, with the assistance of the representative of the Military Governor in our district, intends to confiscate an area of 400 dunam from our lands in order to establish a Jewish settlement on them. The inhabitants of the village obviously are opposed to the actions of Mr. Nahmani because such a thing will destroy and ruin our village's economy. We shall use all means at our disposal to put a stop to the ambitions of Mr. Nahmani.[17]

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[15] AS FM 2405/2, "Summary of the Session of the Committee for the Execution of the Land Acquisition Law," 1 April 1954.

[16] Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, Table No. 5, pp. 292-296. The figures on Bait Jan are taken from the archive of the village's local council.

[17] AHA, 13/A, "To Public Opinion in Israel." On behalf of Buqay'a inhabit-

Soon after, however, as villagers of Buqay'a claim, some of those who had signed the leaflet were found to have made a deal with Nahmani and in return for land he took from them for his new Jewish settlement to have accepted "absentees property." By putting their signature to the common protest (as those who could read and write) they had automatically come into Nahmani's sight, who thereupon singled them out for "treatment"—while some remained immune, inevitably there were others who fell victim to his carrot-and-stick schemes and began collaborating with him.

The fate of Buqay'a was not different from any of the other villages whose lands were made subject to the Land Acquisition Law and where Nahmani then began "negotiating" compensation. While most of the lands of Shafa'amr, Abu Snan, Sajur, and Hurfaysh were expropriated through the 1953 law or because they came under the regulations pertaining to "uncultivated" lands, in 'Isfiya it was through the Absentees Property Law that a lot of land was acquired, since much of it was owned by Arabs who had been living in Haifa until the war. During the 1940s, pressed by economic hardship, peasant farmers from 'Isfiya had sold portions of their lands to Jews and Arabs of Haifa.

The village most affected by the law of 1953 and then by the land regulations that followed in the 1960s was Bait Jan. In 1953 13,000 dunam of an area called *Ard al-Khayt*, near the Hula valley, was declared a security zone, which meant that the villagers were prohibited to enter, let alone cultivate, their lands. In the course of the 1950s and 1960s Nahmani succeeded in persuading part of the villagers to accept cash compensations. In the early 1970s, compensation was again suggested in the form of land near Kibbutz Yakuk, which had been confiscated from the villagers of Mghar, and near Muran, which had been confiscated from the villagers of Kufr Yasif, or land that had been acquired through the Absentees Properties Law, in al-Berwi near Kufr Yasif, and Kufr Anan near Safad. While some of the villagers accepted the offer, those who kept refusing are waiting till today to have their lands returned to them. As mentioned above, *Ard al-Khayt* was turned into part of a "security zone," one of the army's training areas,

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ants, Najib Abbas, Ibrahim Makhul, Salih Barkt'iyya, Sa'id al-As'ad, Husayn Khayr, 18 August 1955; see Nahmani, pp. 121-131, where he refers to these land expropriations and to the plan to establish a new Jewish settlement on them instead (today's "New Pek'in").

called Zone 100 (Heb.: *shetah me'ah*). At the time of writing a small portion is still in use as such, but most of *Ard al-Khayt* has by now been distributed between the Jewish settlements of Ayelet ha-Shahar, Hatzor ha-Galil and Sadeh Eliezer.[18]

Although the Prescription Law of 1958 was repealed when the Land Law of 1969 came into effect, settlement of title (Heb.: *hezder zkhuyyot bamkarkiʿin*) continued to be a problem hitting almost all the Druze villages of the Galilee. Because all these villages are situated in the mountains where agriculture needs a lot of hard preparatory work and large portions of land are habitually left lying fallow for the herds of cattle, by using aerial photographs dating back to 1945 the authorities simply declared thousands of dunam as falling within the "uncultivated lands" category. However, when in the late 1960s the JNF and the state institutions began applying the Settlement of Title law in the Druze villages, the sociopolitical situation was no longer what it had been in the 1950s. A new generation had grown up, was serving in the army and had received more formal education than their parents when they bargained with the Israelis twenty and thirty years before, and militant youth began a campaign against the "confiscations of the land in the Druze villages" and to "save the lands of our grandfathers." Again the law proved stronger. In Yarka, people who had lost their *kushans* (Ottoman registration papers) sought to locate them, in vain, in the Israeli department of the land registry. Moreover, about 12,000 dunam of pasturage, which did appear there, was registered in the name of Yarka's *mukhtar*. Out of anger and resentment the villagers of Julis had, in the 1940s, made an attempt on the life of their Lebanese landlord, Baydun; twenty years later they found themselves without any "legal proof" to qualify for compensation. In Kisra, about a third of the land had been registered during the Ottoman period in the name of "landlords" who would undertake to pay the Ottoman tax in return for part of the village crops, a system which was widespread in the Ottoman Empire.[19]

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[18] See Nahmani, pp. 134-135, for his plans concerning the lands of Hurfaysh and Sajur. Information on *Ard al-Khayt* from the archive of Bait Jan's local council.

[19] Information from the local councils of Kisra, Yarka and Julis. In order to avoid the severe taxation of the Ottomans, whose land registries began in 1858, villagers used to register their land in the name of an "influential" trader, officer, or other who in return for part of the yield, would take care of the tax.

The Druze campaign against the government's "confiscation measures" culminated in a series of protest meetings held in *maqam al-Khadr*. In Kisra, the villagers went beyond verbal protests and were able to prevent the JNF representatives and Jewish workers by force from beginning work on the lands in question. Until the present day ownership of the lands of Kisra is considered "unsettled."[20] Bait Jan again lost another 16,000 dunam because of the land laws and successive regulations, while a further 26,000 dunam were affected by the Law of National Parks of 1963, which set out to create a number of nature reserves. It so happened that the areas selected for the "national" parks directly affected the Druzes in the upper Galilee and on the Carmel. In other words, Bait Jan is now in the heart of a "national" park and Buqay'a, 'Ayn al-Asad and Hurfaysh are on its edges, while 'Isfiya and Daliat al-Carmel are surrounded on all sides by a "national" park. On 18 November 1965, the Miron mountain in the upper Galilee, and soon after the Carmel Park were declared nature reserves. Although the private lands within these areas remain legally in the possession of their holders, the National Parks law prohibits any kind of building to be carried out and restricts cultivation within these areas. Since by the mid-1960s the Druzes of the Galilee and the Carmel had largely abandoned agriculture for employment outside their villages, the creation of these parks had no immediate impact on their economic life. That only came in the early 1980s when building inside the Druze villages had expanded at the expense of the agricultural lands around the old core of the villages and was now encroaching upon the borders of the nature reserves. Because of the bureaucratic hurdles and the usual official footdragging, construction plans in almost all Druze, and for that matter all other Arab, villages seldom had the required permits and many buildings thus were illegal and could at any time be torn down by the authorities. Conflict between the Nature Reserves Authority and the Druze villages duly broke out in the mid-1980s, reaching a peak on 6 June 1987 when there was a violent confrontation between the inhabitants of Bait Jan, reinforced by Druzes from many other villages, and the Israeli police forces. The Minister of Agriculture stepped in and a compromise was reached

[20] Private papers of Professor Fadil Mansur. Mansur is an agronome and the first Druze to obtain a Ph.D. degree (in 1977).

between the Nature Reserves Authority and the local council of Bait Jan whereby an area of several dunams was brought under the jurisdiction of the local council to help broaden the construction and development zones of the village.[21]

This has created the following ironic situation: private and public housing projects as well as the infrastructure of industrial and touristic sites are scheduled to take up all remaining agricultural zones—Arabs who in the 1940s, 1950s and even 1960s sold their lands at low prices to Jews are now trying to purchase them back at much higher rates so as to be able to put up a house or business.[22]

Summing up, we find that when the official land policy the state introduced in the early 1950s led to the expropriation of most Arab-owned agricultural land, this forced Arab peasant farmers not only to gradually abandon agriculture but even to sell most of those lands they had been able to hold onto because of the prohibitively high taxes imposed on private lands. In the following chapter the "struggle" of the Druzes against the expropriation of their lands will be described in more detail. Meanwhile, the reader may form an impression of the scope of the process whereby Druze villages lost their lands, through expropriation by the state and then also through sale, from Table 4.1. As the expropriation of Arab-owned land through state laws was more or less completed by 1962, and no data are available after 1962, per capita figures for 1995 are based on data for 1962 (villages may of course have gained or lost land during the long drawn-out processes over "disputed lands" after 1962). Moreover, a survey I carried out in 1995 through the local councils shows that today more than 40 percent of single-household families, apart from the plot on which they built their house, no longer own any land.

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[21] DA, file Bait Jan. Summary of a one-day conference, "Nature Reserves and the Druze Villages: Integration or Conflict," held at Haifa University, 12 January 1988.

[22] Ibid., Summary of a one-day conference on "The physical structure of the Druze village in Israel," held at Haifa University, 8 May 1985. These villages were mostly located in the mountainous regions of the Galilee, where farming required extra effort, away from the fertile plains where, after 1948, no Arab village was left standing.

## *Creating an Arab Proletariat*

As I already briefly indicated above, expropriation of land and the dire economic situation in the years immediately following the 1948 war forced many Arab peasant farmers to abandon agriculture and to seek work in other sectors of the new state they were now part of. This was a gradual process—not only did it take time for them to realize that the severe restrictions official government policy put in their way were intended to disrupt the traditional patterns of their society, but there were at first conflicting signals, with the government actively stimulating agricultural production in the Arab villages.

The majority of the Jews who had immigrated to Palestine over the years had gone to live in the cities, only a small minority being attracted to the communal agricultural settlements that were the *kibbutzim* and the *moshavim*. Thus, Arab produce was needed to help cover the demands of the Jewish market. Encouraging the Arab agricultural sector, however, at the same time meant subordinating it to the Jewish economy, a policy which was spelled out through the combined efforts of the Ministries of Agriculture and Finance, the Military Governor and the Prime Minister's Adviser for Minorities Affairs. To implement it, the Agriculture Ministry set up, as early as 1949, a special "Department for the Arab Village." No distinction was made between Arab and Druze villages.

From the reports the Arab Village Department put together in the early 1950s we may glean what impact its work had on the "Arab agricultural sector." A comprehensive report, submitted at the end of 1951, puts the Arab peasant population at 120,000, spread over 96 villages (the Bedouin in the south of the country not included) and with 75 percent of them i.e., 90,000, still employed in agriculture.[23] As the report makes clear, one of the main aims of the authorities was to have the Arab peasants shift from subsistence farming to cash crop farming. From 1948 till 1951 the crop area cultivated by Arab farmers increased by more than 10 percent, from 514,400 to 572,800 dunam, the additional 58,400 dunam not, of course, made over to them but consisting of land that they "rented" either from neighboring Jewish settlements or from the Custodian of Absentees' Properties.

[23] SA FM 2402/22B, The Ministry of Agriculture, the Department of the Arab Villages, report on the period of 1948-1951 (undated).

Table 4.1 Land ownership (dunam) in the Druze villages, 1950-1995

| Village | Population | | | Land | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total (including refugees) 1950 | Total 1995 | Druze 1950 | 1939 total | 1945 total | 1962 total | 1950 per capita | 1995 per capita* |
| Abu Snan | 1,460 (510) | 8,700 | 510 | 13,250 | 12,871 | 5,434 | 13.5 | 0.620 |
| Ayn al-Asad | 130 | 600 | 130 | 12,000 | — | 1,204 | 27.6 | 2.000 |
| Bait Jan | 1,550 (20) | 7,800 | 1,530 | 45,650 | — | 6,000 | 29.4 | 0.760 |
| Buqay'a | 1,110 (20) | 4,000 | 640 | 14,200 | 10,276 | 3,500 | 9.4 | 0.870 |
| Hurfaysh | 830 (40) | 4,030 | 640 | 16,900 | 14.623 | 5,254 | 18.5 | 1.300 |
| Jath | 325 (115) | 1,800 | 210 | 6,000 | 5,907 | 1,727 | 28.1 | 0.960 |
| Julis | 1,075 (215) | 4,240 | 860 | 14,700 | 12,835 | 6,010 | 14.9 | 1.400 |
| Kufr Smai' | 400 (50) | 2,000 | 280 | 7,150 | 7,150 | 2,436 | 20.4 | 1.200 |
| Kufr Yasif | 1,730 (300) | 6,700 | 60 | 6,750 | 6,729 | 4,581 | 4.7 | 0.680 |
| Kisra | 520 (120) | 2,800 | 440 | 10,600 | | 7,800 | 22.7 | 2.780 |
| Mghar | 2,643 (479) | 14,900 | 1,252 | 59,250 | 45,590 | 12,227 | 20.9 | 0.820 |
| Rama | 2,300 (500) | 6,680 | 500 | 24,500 | 23,701 | 7,322 | 13.16 | 1.090 |
| Sajur | 400 (50) | 2,660 | 350 | 8,250 | 8,172 | 1,533 | 23.3 | 0.580 |
| Shafa'amr | 3,900 (500) | 23,500 | 750 | — | 58,725 | 10,371 | 17.2 | 0.440 |
| Yahuh | 515 (55) | 2,220 | 460 | 12,900 | 12,466 | 1,343 | 27.1 | 0.600 |
| Yarka | 1,930 (220) | 9,320 | 1,710 | 35,000 | 30,597 | 10,701 | 17.9 | 1.150 |
| Daliat al-Carmel | 3,000 | 11,300 | 2,850 | 31,500 | 19.741 | 13,026 | 6.9 | 1.150 |
| 'Isfiya | 1,800 | 8,240 | 1,300 | 32,500 | 16,811 | 9,631 | 9.3 | 1.170 |
| Total | 17,167 | 121,590 | 14,4780 | | 337,916 | 97,386 | 19.6 | 0.800 |

*Based on 1962 land figures (see text)

Sources: Population—1950: SA FM 2402/20, List of the Arab Populations, 15 February 1950. 1995: The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, List of localities, their populations and codes, 31 December 1994 (January 1995). Land—1939: E. Epstein, "ha-Druzim be-Eretz Isra'el" (Yalkut ha-Mizrah ha-Tikhon), No. 32-33, 1940, pp. 25-43; 1945: S. Jiryis, pp. 292-296; 3) 1950: ibid. and the Druze local councils.

Vegetables, legumes and tobacco were most in demand in these early years of the state and there was an increase in area of 270 percent for these cash crops, from 57,400 to 156,800 dunam. For tobacco alone the increase was as high as 700 percent, from 6,400 to 48,000 dunam. At the same time, apart from helping to develop the existing water sources in the Arab villages, the government made no irrigation water available, its main form of support being limited to financial credit, distribution of seeds, and the supply of "mechanical units," consisting of six tractors and combine harvesters.[24]

Although the Arab Village Department was officially a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture, its staff of fifteen had to coordinate their activities with the Adviser for Minorities Affairs and with the Military Governor. In other words, it fell under the full control of the two institutions that, together with the Shin Bet, determined the everyday life of the Arab population. Aware that a high rate of unemployment among the Arabs, notably in the mixed cities, could, in the language of official government institutions, form a "security threat," the Histadrut (Hebrew for "organization," i.e., the "General Organization of Hebrew Workers in the Land of Israel," the Yishuv's and later the state's main labor union), through its Arab Department set out to improve the situation. On 7 March 1949 a meeting was arranged in Acre between the Department's Jewish director and Arab "workers' representatives" of Nazareth, Ramla, Lod, and Acre, whose Arab populations were not generally employed in agriculture, and representatives from the Muslim village of Tamra, and from three villages inhabited by Druzes, Shafa'amr, Rama, and 'Isfiya,[25] and some efforts were made to approximate the wages of Arab workers to those of Jews who worked in the same place and branch. The Arab Village Department, on the other hand, continued to maintain, and even justified, the gap in prices Arabs could obtain for their produce vis-à-vis their Jewish counterparts, thus creating another factor that led many peasants to seek work outside agriculture. But here they came up against the restrictions of the Military Government that made any successful absorption of large num-

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 2402/23, Report "Among the Arabs," 13 March 1949 (probably originating from the Office of the Adviser for Minorities Affairs).

bers of Arab villagers into the Israeli labor market virtually impossible.

During the 1950s and early 1960s these two opposing forces, i.e., the push force of the villages' declining agriculture and the constraints of the Military Government inhibiting free movement, created additional pressure on the available resources of the villages, with many of those who found it hard to survive selling more and more of their as yet unconfiscated lands. A significant conclusion thus is that the proletarization of the Arab peasant farmers set in long before they were able to enter the labor market outside their villages. One of the reasons why, in 1966, the Military Government was officially abolished (though many of its controls would remain in place under various guises) was that it hindered the absorption of the Arab proletariat into the wider Jewish economy. Once Arabs were allowed to travel more freely to other parts of the country in search of work, the decline of Arab agriculture was swift and irrevocable.

According to a report of the Ministry of Employment, of an Arab population of 170,000, in 1951, about 45,000 were income earners, constituting the Arab labor force. About 30,000 of these, more than 66 percent, were then employed in agriculture.[26] In 1961 this still was 42.2 percent, to drop sharply to 16.4 in 1975 and to 4 percent in 1994.[27]

Criticism came early on from Zionist left-wing parties as well as many Israeli intellectuals in the public sphere. For example, on 25 February 1949 the party organ of MAPAM, *Al ha-Mishmar*, lay the cause of unemployment among the Arabs squarely at the door of the Military Governor and its policy of restricting Arabs who were looking for work.[28] Already in the Ministry of Employment report there are indications that the situation of Arab unemployment was improving and that thanks to initiatives of several Israe-

[26] Ibid., 2402/22B, Director of the Employment Department to FM, July 1951.

[27] The Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, *Moslems, Christians and Druzes in Israel, Data from Stage "A" and "B" of the Census of 1961* (Publication No. 17. Jerusalem 1995), Table 51, p. 67; SAI (Jerusalem 1976), Table xii/10; and ibid. (Jerusalem 1995), Table 12.20.

[28] SAS FM, 2402/23, Report "Among the Arabs," 13 March 1949, and *al ha-Mishmar*, 25 February 1949. The political, moral and economic "damages" the Military Government was inflicting on the Arabs continued to be criticized by some Jewish parties and individuals, which helped introduce some ease at the end of the 1950s (the Military Government was only abolished in 1966).

li departments, larger numbers of unemployed were being absorbed into the Jewish agriculture and construction sectors.[29] However, a wide gap persisted between the wages of the Jewish workers and these "newcomers" to the Israeli labor market, among them Druzes from 'Isfiya, Shafa'amr and Daliat al-Carmel. The latter clearly felt there was "discrimination" in the way they were being paid as compaerd to their Jewish co-workers.[30] Blatant wage discrimination between Arabs and Jews within the same employment sector continued until the early 1960s and in many cases can be found until the present day.[31] Officials within the government were quick to "justify" this gap:

> The problem of Arab employment today has moved from a state of lack of jobs to the unpleasant [*sic*] state of affairs where Arab workers are taking up more jobs than they deserve in relation to the situation of the employment among the [country's] Jewish inhabitants. This is due to the high productivity of their work and [the fact that they are] content with little. Wages of the skilled [Arab] worker are in many cases equal to those of the Jew. Wages of the unskilled worker are less than those of the Jew, but are rising steadily and today are twice as high as in 1947 and three times the wages in neighboring countries.[32]

The report depicts the situation in 1949 as assessed by the authorities (and, as the reader will be aware, phrased accordingly)—where labor relations are concerned, much has remained the same until the present.

The division of Palestine's economy into an Arab and a Jewish one occurred during the British Mandate (whose terms committed Britain to secure the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine).[33] Now, in 1949, instead of separation came a pro-

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[29] SA, FM, 2402/22B, Director of the Employment Department to FM, July 1951.

[30] Ibid., 2402/23, Report "Among the Arabs," 13 March 1949.

[31] For more details on the development of the issue, see M. Ben-Sira, *The Wage Gap between Jewish Residents and the Arab Residents of Israel in the Labor Market* (MA thesis, Tel Aviv University, 1991), as quoted in Noah Lewin-Epstein and Moshe Semyonov, *The Arab Minority in Israel's Economy, Patterns of Ethnic Inequality* (Boulder-San Francisco-Oxford 1993).

[32] SA FM 2402/23, Report on "The Problems of the Arab Minority," undated and unsigned (probably by the Adviser for Minorities Affairs, late 1949 or early 1950).

[33] "That the Zionist settler movement, unable to make much headway under Ottoman rule, was nurtured by and eventually thrived within the British colonial context is undeniable. Within a few years of the inception of a British Ad-

cess of subordination, i.e., the harnessing of Arab resources to the interests of the Jewish population and economy. Gaps in income were the result of the options available to the Arabs in the country's labor market and of the difference in the levels of education and vocational training the state's educational system maintained between Jews and Arabs.[34] That for the Druze labor force the process devolved more rapidly than for the other Arab communities had much to do, as we saw in the previous chapter, with the arrangement whereby Druzes served in the Israeli Defense Forces, at first "voluntarily" and, since 1956, "obligatorily," which meant that they could move within the country with relative ease much before the other Arabs. Because of this, during the 1950s and 1960s, though equally subordinated to the Jewish economy, the Druze labor force would develop its own characteristics. How this, in turn, affected the community as a whole will be analyzed later on.

That already during the 1950s and mid-1960s more money could be earned outside the villages than could be made by cultivating crops became an additional factor explaining why Arab peasant farmers began abandoning the land in greater numbers. Not only was the Arab agricultural sector being subordinated to the state economy, it was controlled by an etatist policy that prohibited the sale of Arab produce other than through state agencies or Jewish companies. While the Israeli ministries maintained that the gap in wages stemmed from the demand and supply forces in the labor market, they could not claim the same for the gap between the prices of Arab and Jewish agricultural products, which they themselves had created and made sure was kept in place. Israeli officials went further and justified the gap by developing "arguments" they based on the differences in production costs and consumption patterns of Jews and Arabs. As articulated by the author of the report quoted above:

> The prices of the products [for the Arabs] are fixed in accordance with the cost of production which is lower than that of the Jewish sector due to their high productivity (productivity of the Jewish

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ministration, the Zionists had the beginnings of a national economic base underpinning their demonstrably nationalist ideology"—Barbara Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine*, pp. 3-4.

[34] On these issues, see Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, *The Arab Minority in Israel's Economy*, pp. 45-60, 114-135.

> agricultural worker is low due to the lack of confidence and [farming] tradition among the new immigrants), low standard of living, and the tradition of women and children joining in the work.[35]

In a report he sent on 18 April 1950 to the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Employment and Supply, and to all Military Governors, Palmon defended the policy of fixing two price ranges for agricultural products in much the same fashion:

> In my view, it is necessary to maintain a gap between the price which is given to the Jewish producer and that which is given to the Arab producer.... during the period of the Mandatory government prices were determined by free market competition, e.g., the Arab sector determined the prices. Today market prices are determined by the needs of the Jewish sector. These needs comprise: (1) High cost of production following from the living standard of the Jewish sector. (2) Subsidies to the cost of production for the new immigrants who lack the [necessary] skill and habit of [physical] work.... *I do not think that it is fair that the Jewish consumer should pay the Arab producer anything in addition to the cost of production.* In order to prove [the reasonableness of] this assumption, I investigated one Arab village called Kufr Qasim, to the east of Petah Tikva. The village cultivates almost all the lands it owned before 1948 which provide its inhabitants with the regular supply of any fallah in Israel. When there was an increase in the demand for building stones, quarries were established near the village where the inhabitants found work. [Like this the village] received about IL 200 daily for eight months. Eight months later I visited the village again and found the inhabitants still living together with their animals and hens in the same dirty room.... With the money, which they do not spend, they buy gold coins.... Thus it is necessary to pay the Arab producer in accordance to *his* needs and the Jewish producer in accordance to *his*.[36]

A month later the government established an inter-ministerial committee to look into the matter. In addition to Palmon, it comprised representatives of three other Ministries. In its session of 17 May 1950, the commission decided to maintain the gap in prices, again on the grounds that "the living standard and production costs in the Arab agricultural sector are lower than those in the Jewish agricultural sector."[37] In an unsigned secret memo, most

[35] SA FM 2402/23, Report on "The Problems of the Arab Minority."

[36] Ibid., 2402/22B, Palmon to the Ministry of Finance (copies to three other ministers and to the Military Government's command), 18 April 1950 (emphasis added).

[37] Ibid., Report on the session (held on 17 May 1950) of "The Commission on the Investigation of the Price Gaps of Arab Produce,"18 July 1950.

likely from one of the officials of the Adviser's Office or the Shin Bet which Palmon received in July, new arguments were fielded in order to justify maintaining the price gap:

> Since the agricultural potential of the Arab sector amounts to more than a third of the vegetable production of the [entire] country, there is a danger that the Jewish sector will not be able to cope with the competition.... If we allow the same prices, we will be transferring to the Arab sector a lot of money which will be used for undesirable goals, such as being smuggled across the border, and which will introduce an inflationary factor in the country.... We must develop the farms of the new Jewish settlements which have to begin to increase, with or without irrigation, the production of vegetables. If, to all the objective difficulties that already exist in the Jewish sector, we add the yoke of competition from Arab production we will destroy the basis of these farms.

Perhaps in order to show that with the measures he was advocating he had his heart in the right place, the author of the memo added: "The gap in prices does not mean discrimination but is intended to help the Arab peasant farmer market his products, defending him against brokers and market dealers who might exploit his ignorance [*sic*]." At the bottom of his copy of the report, Palmon wrote: "Couldn't agree more."[38]

Since it left no room for any independent action or decision on the part of the peasants but forced them to sell their products exclusively through state agencies, this etatist marketing system soon led to bureaucratic hurdles that created hardships far beyond those any "exploitation of the brokers" could have brought. To reach the state agencies peasants had to arrange the marketing of their products with the marketing cooperatives the government and the Histadrut had established within the villages. When early in 1951 an economic committee of the Knesset discussed the marketing of Arab agriculture products, it came up with a "new arrangement" which, over the protest of some left-wing Knesset members, maintained the gap in prices. But, so as to improve marketing conditions, the committee called for the establishment of a new marketing company in which the "Arab element" was to be represented by 31 percent of its total shares, the Histadrut's Tnuva by 31 percent, Tana-Amid by 5 percent and Jewish private

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[38] "*Mizdaheh 'im kol he-amur l'"il*"; cf. ibid., secret memo, "The Arrangement's Problem of Marketing Arab Agricultural Produce," 7 July 1950.

enterprises by 33 percent. The shares of the "Arab element" were subsequently distributed among some of the new cooperatives that were then being put up in the Arab villages.[39] A year later there were about seventy-seven of such cooperative societies in the Arab villages and cities of the Galilee and the Carmel. Among the sixteen societies erected in the Druze villages twelve were intended to market the villagers' cash crops, notably tobacco.[40]

In the Druze villages, as well as in many other Arab villages, the way these cooperatives were set up and run was largely dictated by internal clan factionalism and by the active intervention of the ubiquitous Israeli authorities, notably the Office of the Adviser, the Shin Bet and the Military Governor. Except for four (two in Buqay'a and one each in Bait Jan and Hurfaysh), all Druze cooperatives were established to buy the tobacco that was gradually becoming the main crop of the Druze villages. That there was no let-up in government policy is shown by a storm of protest, in January 1952, against the gap in the prices of agricultural products, especially tobacco, which was joined even by Arab Knesset members of the MAPAI-affiliated lists.[41] It took another year before the government, on 9 March 1953, decided to remove the price gap between Arab and Jewish products, and it assigned Palmon to coordinate between the Ministries involved in the issue. Meanwhile, a central committee was established comprising Palmon and representatives of the Ministries of Agriculture, the Interior, Defense and Police and a representative of the IDF's general staff.[42] The result was that by the end of 1953, the government introduced some ease in the state control of the prices of vegetables and fruits. But by then the Jewish sector was dominating the market. Some areas, however, did benefit from the reduction in state control, for example, the Triangle, while the Druze villages in the Galilee and the Carmel continued to grow tobacco.

By early 1954, its price fixed by the Custom Department, Israeli tobacco was produced mainly by the Arab villages of the north.

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[39] AHA, Report of the Shin Bet, "The Arabs in Israel, Basic Survey," September 1951, p. 5.

[40] SA FM 2402/22B, List of Arab cooperative societies, undated (1952). Each society comprised about 50 to 60 members; 16 of them were established in villages inhabited by the Druzes.

[41] Ibid., FM to Ministry of the Treasury, and FM to the Ministry of Communication, 28 January 1952; copies of these two letters were sent to Palmon.

[42] Ibid., Government decision No. 249, "The Arab Problem," 9 March 1952.

The mountainous topography of most Druze villages makes their arable lands not very suitable for wheat crops; tobacco was a natural candidate, with new areas allocated to its production in every village. In the Western Galilee alone, where most Druze villages are situated, an area of 20,000 dunam was set aside for tobacco in 1954. "In some villages the farmers began uprooting olive trees so as to prepare the land for tobacco growing, because tobacco is more profitable than olive oil."[43] Meanwhile, areas that traditionally had been allocated to wheat and barley were now also increasingly used for cash crops, mainly again tobacco and legumes.

None of these products, however, was as profitable as work outside the village. The construction sector, which offered work in its quarries and in building homes and roads, was absorbing those who no longer had any lands or who were looking for better wages and could get the required permits from the Military Governors.[44] Finally, in the late 1950s, tobacco too decreased sharply when in the Israeli labor market there was a growing demand for skilled and unskilled workers and travel restrictions for the Arabs were lifted somewhat following the decisions of the Rozen committee the government had established, on 15 March 1958, to investigate whether to maintain or dissolve the Military Government. This committee comprised Pinhas Rozen, then Minister of Justice, and five other Ministers. Out of the six, four members of the committee were convinced that during ten years of Military Government the Arab minority had not constituted a "security threat" for the state. While the committee was in favor of dissolving the Military Government, it recommended to keep its apparatus in place for the time being, but to remove many of its restrictions.[45]

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[43] Ibid., Report of the Military Government's department on the situation in the territories, March 1954. The term "territories" denoted the Arab areas under the Military Government.

[44] Ibid., Reports of the Military Government's department, February and May 1954. The reports give figures on the permits of sorties from the villages and cities for work or other purposes.

[45] Giv'at Haviva Archives (Information Center), Military Government file; see Sara Ozacky-Lazar, "Hitgabshut Yahase ha-Gomlin Ben Yehudim le-'Aravim be-Mdinat Isra'el, ha-'Isur ha-Rishon, 1948-1958 (Crystallization of Mutual Relations between Jews and Arabs in the State of Israel: The First Decade 1948-1958) (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Department of Middle Eastern History, Haifa University, 1996), pp. 100-109.

This ease in restrictions had much to do with changes in the political behavior of the Palestinian Arabs in general and of the intellectuals among them in particular. Pointing to the democracy to which the Jewish state had committed itself, a younger generation of Arabs began holding up its ideals of pluralism and the rule of law to a government that often appeared rather highhanded in this respect. Together with the intense criticism some Jewish circle were leveling against the existence of the Military Government, this began to erode the argument that military rule was necessary for the "deterrent effect" it had on the Arab citizens of the state.

Meanwhile, Arab nationalism and the changing political environment in the wider world could not fail to have their impact on the Israeli Arab minorities. Arab clan chiefs who were collaborating with the Military Government and the Office of the Prime Minister's Adviser began to face a new generation of educated and well-informed young people. In effect, the political and economic changes in the late 1950s/early 1960s formed a hot-house for the new militant elite that was to emerge in the 1970s and 80s.[46]

Although the Druzes shared these developments with the other Arab communities, the "normal status" that was soon to be conferred upon them seemed even more compellingly to lay out in front of them the road they had begun to travel when the first Druze volunteers were recruited into the Israeli Defense Forces in 1948. Neither the political and economic changes nor the new generation of young intellectuals were able to effect even a minimal dent in the traditional role of the Druze chiefs through whom

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[46] These economic political developments and the impact they might have on the future relations of the State of Israel and its Arab minority population occupied the minds of many Israeli officials, notably the Shin Bet and the Department of Planning and Research in the IDF. SA FM 3413/3, under the title "The Future of the Arab Minority" the IDF's Department of Planning and Research collected information on every aspect of Arab life, including demographic, economic, educational, political organizations, attitude toward the military government, the elections, the different religious communities, etc.; see Protocols (of sessions of 6 and 25 May 1962; 15 August 1962) 7 and 27 May 1962, and 22 August 1962. The Shin Bet provided the Department with a detailed report under the title "Political, Communal, and Social Organizations within the Arab Minority in Israel," 27 June 1962. An even more detailed report of the Shin Bet is found in AHA, under the title, "Advice on How to Treat the Arab Minority in Israel," Top secret, no exact date (1962). It seems that Abba Hushi was consulted by the IDF's Department of Planning and Research; cf. AHA 131/B, Ram Ron, Director of the IDF's Department of Planning to Abba Hushi, 30 May 1962.

the Israeli authorities were carrying out their separatist "Druze" policies. In 1954, at a point when virtually all Druze chiefs had fallen in step with the Israeli officials, Palmon, the *mukhtar* of the Arabs as some called him, stepped down as the Prime Minister's Adviser in Minorities Affairs. Although his departure inevitably signaled a change—his successors lacked either the power or the desire to go as far as he had done in exerting control over and interfering in the lives of Israel's Arab population—Palmon left a clear stamp on the Office, which continued to deal with Druze affairs until as late as 1976. In effect, Palmon may be considered the one Israeli government official singularly responsible for steering the country's Druze community onto its own, separate course. The dominant role he played in the negotiations with the Druze battalion of Shakib Wahab and in the subsequent recruitment of Druze volunteers into the IDF so as to forestall any "going back," the idea he was the first to promote of separating the Druzes from the other Arabs and the active support with which he rewarded those chiefs who were willing to go along with his schemes and help him carry out his "Druze" policy, all constituted the foundations upon which during the years 1956-1963 the status of the Druzes as a socio-culturally and religiously independent community would be built.[47]

### *A New Formal Status...*

Palmon's departure came as a great relief to Sheikhs Amin Tarif and Jabr Mu'addi. For their political power within the community, both relied on the backing of Abba Ḥushi. As outlined in chapter two, Abba Ḥushi was the main Zionist who until the early 1940s had cultivated ties with Druzes, but thereafter had lost out to a number of competitors. Palmon's leaving the field, notably as this coincided with a number of economic changes in the Arab com-

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[47] Although some of Palmon's policies toward the Arabs are dealt with here, his personality and the ideas he promoted during the first years of the State of Israel are worth special study. For example, at one point he suggested issuing two sorts of identity cards with different colors to the Arabs, one for Arabs who had "proved their loyalty" to the State and the other for those who had not. In 1953 he declared that democracy was a form of government not fit for the Arab societies and others; see *Davar*, 14 January 1953.

munities, enabled Abba Ḥushi to resume the role he had played in the 1930s. As mayor of Haifa, the main city in the north of Israel, one of the most powerful men in the Histadrut (for decades the state's "second" government) and the most influential figure of MAPAI in the north, Abba Hushi now stepped back into the limelight to replace Palmon as the *mukhtar* of the Arabs.[48]

In 1953, when Palmon and Yanai launched their attack against Sheikh Amin for the "hostile position" he was then taking up vis-à-vis the recruitment of Druzes into the IDF, Abba Ḥushi worked to strengthen his relations with the Tarif faction while also trying to renew his old friendship with Sheikhs Labib Abu Rukun and Salih Khnayfis. As already mentioned, as of 1954 the agenda of the *ziyara* to the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb was decided and invitations to the event sent by Sheikh Amin Tarif together with Abba Ḥushi. In October 1954, with a new enlistment effort under way, Sheikh Amin Tarif's brother, Salman, asked Abba Ḥushi to mediate between them and the Ministry of Communication so that the Tarif brothers might be granted "permission to buy a new car, a Kaiser-Frazer."[49] To the supervisor of transport, Abba Hushi indicated that "Sheikh Salman Tarif is the brother of Sheikh Amin Tarif, the religious leader of the Druze community in Israel... As you know the Druze chiefs in Israel are counted among our supporters and friends and in my view it is highly recommendable to respond [positively] to his demand."[50] It may have been coincidence that the request came at the time of the recruitment effort but the correspondence carried on between the Tarif and other clan chiefs and Abba Hushi as of 1954 deepens the impression that increasingly the Druze chiefs were foremost looking out for their personal and clan interests, which the authorities encouraged as reward for their support of the official policy vis-à-vis the Druze community.

Unlike the year before, the Tarifs in 1954 kept silent on the subject of the new recruitment effort. They may have been helped in this by the fact that the enlistment order of 10 July was not

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[48] Apparently use of this nickname now for Abba Ḥushi quickly caught on among the Arabs; the correspondences of Abba Hushi with the Arab chiefs testify that he was the address for even their smallest problems.

[49] AHA 13/1, Salman Tarif to Abba Ḥushi, 12 October 1954.

[50] Ibid., Abba Ḥushi to M. Bar, the supervisor for transport in the Ministry of Transport, 22 October 1954.

restricted to their own community but was addressed as well to the Muslim and Christian minorities, and by the public debate it elicited among the latter. While the Israeli authorities assumed that the response would be minimal, if not nil, among the Arabs there were those who thought that, since it was one of the duties that came with citizenship, military service would open the door for them to full civic equality. Thus it came as somewhat of a surprise to the authorities when out of a prepared list of 4,520 names of Muslim and Christian youths most indeed showed up and wanted to be enlisted. None of these, of course, was recruited,[51] while the Druzes continued to serve on a voluntary basis until the "special arrangement" of May 1956 that made army duty for the Druzes obligatory.

Acceptance among the Druze chiefs of the conscription law was clinched with the intense competition that broke out between Salih Khnayfis and Jabr Mu'addi around the general elections of July 1955. As before the Druze villages were split into two camps, both with allegiance to the same party. The difference was that this time the two candidates, in addition to manipulating the clan dispute, were able to take advantage of economic factors to mobilize voters. Thus, Jabr Mu'addi could use the Histadrut offices in Haifa and Acre to find employment for people promising to support him, while Salih Khnafis established his own personal employment office, each of them relying on their Jewish "patrons" to mediate and come up with the required number of jobs, Mu'addi on Abba Hushi and Khnayfis on the new Adviser for Minorities Affairs, the commanders of the Druze Unit and others.[52]

Until 1948 the living standard of the Druze chiefs had never differed much from that of ordinary people. Starting in 1953, however, their economic situation improved considerably, turning them gradually into a separate "upper class." Some chiefs now owned whole new cattle farms, others became affluent as employment brokers for Jewish employers and one even held shares in the Israeli Dead Sea factories where many hundreds of Druzes had been given jobs.[53]

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[51] SA FM 2402/18, Report on "The Enlistment of the Recruits of the Minorities in the IDF," 1 October 1954. See also Pappé, "Uneasy Coexistence," pp. 625 ff.

[52] In 1955 the two Druze Members of Knesset opened employment offices.

[53] One way in which they flaunted their new-found status was by frequently

By the end of 1955 the number of Druze teachers was thirty-three, only four of whom were women. The number of Druze students enrolled at university was not more than three and the secondary schools of Rama, Kufr Yasif, Nazareth, and Haifa together counted only twenty-five pupils.[54] Following the reorganization of the school system in 1948-49, who would be appointed as teachers in these schools was generally decided by the chiefs, with only a small number who belonged to the few who had obtained a modern education among the Druzes having entered the system on their own account. These latter then tried to create some opposition to the clan chiefs among their colleagues. Their first effort came on 5 June 1955, when at the initiative of a young teacher from Rama, Nadim al-Qasim, twenty-one Druze teachers met in Acre to discuss the "educational problems of the Druze community." Personally well aware of the political nature of the meeting, al-Qasim adroitly introduced as first item to be discussed the "issue of the Ramadan feast, '*id al-fitr.*" Addressing what politically was after all a mixed group of teachers, some of whom were duty-bound to their chiefs, al-Qasim said that he was astonished by the unilateral decision the Ministry of Education had taken to deprive the Druze teachers of their right to celebrate the feast which was so much part of their culture and heritage. The participants decided to seek out Sheikh Amin Tarif to hear his views on the issue, as well as to question him about the rumor that he had been behind the official decision. Nadim al-Qasim meanwhile was elected secretary of what became the first Druze organization seeking to play an active role in the internal politics of the Druze community, *al-Lujna al-Naqabiyya al-Thaqafiyya* ("Culture Syndicate Committee").[55]

In an attempt to stop what they called "the intervention of the

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arranging huge traditional banquets to which cabinet ministers, government officials and other Druze chiefs were invited. Until the present time, some Druzes still rank leaders in the community according to their ability to hold such copious banquets and it is still said "*za'im fath beto*" (a leader is someone whose doors are always open).

[54] Figures based on the papers of *al-Lajna al-Naqabiyya al-Thaqafiyya* (see below). These papers are part of a rich collection of documents about all Druze organizations in Israel. I wish to thank my student, Mr. Suhayl Faraj, for the time and effort he spent in bringing together what is a veritable mine of information on the economic, political and ideological development of the Druze community in Israel (kept at the DA).

[55] DA, LNT, session of 5 June 1955.

Ministry of Education in Druze religious affairs," Nadim al-Qasim and Amin Khayr met the then Director of the Arab Department in the Ministry, Shmuel Salomon. According to al-Qasim and Khayr, the government official ignored their request to have *'id al-fitr* reinstated, saying "I may give you an answer in six years from now."[56] On 23 October representatives of the new Druze organization met with Sheikh Amin Tarif and succeeded in persuading him to write a letter to Salomon setting out "the educational problems" of the Druzes. It contained four demands: (1) to establish a committee of religious people in order to prepare a special program for the Druzes; (2) to extend the newly recognized feast of Nabi Shu'ayb from three to four days; (3) to appoint Druze headmasters in the Druze schools; and (4) to reconsider the abolition of the feast of *al-fitr* because "our community in this country has been accustomed for decades to celebrate this annual feast. By tradition and custom the feast of *al-fitr* became official."[57]

For expressing their opposition to the Israeli policy the teachers paid a high price when at the beginning of the new school year four of them were fired from their posts. Nadim al-Qasim also left his teaching job and the Druze organization he had set up in order to study medicine at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.[58] Thereafter, Druze teachers restricted their activities "to improve education within the Druze villages" and left politics alone.[59] For the time being the lack of a wider educated stratum, and the dependency on them of teachers, workers, and peasant

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[56] Ibid., session of 10 October 1955.

[57] Ibid., Sheikh Amin Tarif to the Director of the Arab Section in the Ministry of Education, 23 October 1955.

[58] Ibid., LNT, session of 9 October 1955. One of these fired teachers was Salman Shihadi who had joined Shakib Wahhab's battalion in 1948. Nadim al-Qasim graduated in 1963 from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. During his student days, he was very active among the first Arab students there. The ideological debate he conducted with the editor of *al-Yaum* about Druze national identity and his attempts to organize the Druze intellectuals and students in the early 1960s should all be seen against the background of the Israeli government's efforts to "legally" separate the Druzs from the other Arabs. After his studies in Jerusalem he immigrated to the US where he became one of the leading figures in the American Druze community, in the 1970s presiding over the Druze American Society for a number of years.

[59] Ibid.; since its fifth session on 20 November 55 until its dissolution in 1957, the LNT avoided such political questions as separation from the other Arabs, obligatory military service, land expropriations, etc.

farmers left the field again to the chiefs and their priority of interests.

With the obligatory conscription law now gone into effect, the first Druze Unit was recruited on 3 May 1956, as a concrete expression of the "new formal status" the Druzes had obtained within the Jewish state. Since most documents in the State and IDF Archives on the events surrounding the application of law remain classified, in this case, too, it remains difficult to find out who was the driving force behind the law. According to one official version, published in the Government Yearbook, "the law was applied on the Druzes at the request of part of the leaders of the community."[60] In all likelihood, what the Government Yearbook relies on here is a letter Jabr Mu'addi had sent on 15 December 1955 to Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, in which he wrote:

> One year ago I met with his Excellency, Chief-of-Staff General Moshe Dayan in the presence of the Commander of the Minorities Unit, and I urged them to carry out this law ... Since I represent the majority [*sic*] of the Druze community in Israel, I see it as my duty to address my demand anew to your Excellency, particularly in this difficult period in which the Druze community sees itself called upon to sacrifice its soul and property in defense of its existence, its dignity and its homeland. All [*sic*] Druzes are in anticipation of the first day of 1956 on which your Excellency will declare this law to go into effect.

From his last sentence it is clear that Jabr knew in advance that on 1 January 1956 the Chief-of-Staff intended to declare conscription of the Druzes into the IDF obligatory. Equally significant, the way the letter was phrased (in good Hebrew) shows that it must have been written by one of Jabr's "Jewish friends." Also, at the left-hand top corner of the page, a different hand has added: "To the meeting with the Defense Minister on Thursday, to invite the others concerned." In another leaflet, distributed at the end of 1955, Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun appealed to "the Druze nation in Israel" to come and "defend the homeland" against the "aggression of the Egyptians and others."[62] Furthermore, when at the same time a number of Sunni-Muslims and Christians were called

[60] *Government Yearbook*, 1957, p. 49.
[61] IDFA 48/117/6700, Jabr Mu'addi to Ben Gurion, 15 December 1955.
[62] Giv'at Haviva's Center of Information, File (9)8D, Leaflet of Labib Abu Rukun, *'Nida' ila al-Sha'b al-Durzi wa Ibna'ihi fi-Israel'*, 6 November 1955.

up via some of the Histadrut's branches in the Arab villages, about four hundred youth from Nazareth and from the village of Rena appeared willing to join the IDF,[63] but this was never carried out. Officially, the Defense Service Law of Israel imposes on every citizen and permanent resident, both male and female, upon reaching the age of eighteen the duty to serve in the army—when exceptions are made, such as here, this is at the sole "discretion" of the Minister of the Defense.[64]

Israel's "Declaration of Independence" guarantees equality before the law for all its citizens, i.e., as to both rights and duties. In those cases where it carries out policies or passes laws that do not sit well with the stated intentions of the Declaration of Independence—Israel till today does not have a constitution—the government finds refuge in the ambiguity created by the way it uses "nationality" and "citizenship." For example, the official Israeli passport does not make a distinction between the two and speaks of "Israeli citizenship." However, the identity card every resident (over 16) is by law required to carry distinguishes between three "nationalities," (Hebrew: *le'um*, lit. "nation"; Arabic: *qawmiyya*, lit. "nationality")—Jewish, Arab and (since 1962) Druze.[65] Yet a further differentiation between Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druzes and others is introduced by the Population Registry Law (1965) which requires residents also to list which religion they belong to. Thus, Israeli nationality officially is based on the idea of citizenship but in practice first of all means membership of an ethnic group. Illustrations, of course, are the Law of Return (1950) and the Nationality Law (1952) and, as we saw above, the various laws the Knesset passed to facilitate the expropriation of Arab lands.

The Law of Return gives Jews anywhere in the world the unconditional right to immigrate to Israel where they then automatically receive Israeli citizenship under the Nationality Law. For non-

[63] SA C 2214/128, Report of the Minorities Department, March-April 1956.

[64] On the military service, see Kretzmer, pp. 83-85. The official reason why Arabs are exempted from military service is the wish not to put Israeli Arabs in a position where they would be taking up arms against other Arabs from neighboring countries. But while the Druzes of Syria, Lebanon and Jordan serve in their respective armies during conflicts with Israel, no such wish ever played a part vis-à-vis the Druzes in Israel.

[65] *Sefer Hukim*, 1952, p. 146; cf. Kretzmer, "The Population Registry Law does not include a definition of the term 'nation,' nor does it define any of the various recognized 'nations.' The only definition is that of the term 'Jew' (p. 41).

Jews wanting to settle in the country—or re-settle in the case of many Arabs, as the "Law of Return" does not apply to Palestinian refugees—the Entrance to Israel Law (1952) lists a number of conditions which they have to fulfill. This "overt distinction," Kretzmer adds, "is generally regarded as a fundamental principle of the State of Israel, possibly even its *raison d'etre* as a Jewish state."[66] Moreover, the Palestinian Arabs who became part of the State of Israel after the war of 1948 could not claim automatic citizenship but had to comply with the rules set out in the Nationality Law which offered them the three options of residence, birth or naturalization.

Although "recognition" of the Druzes as an independent ethno-religious community not belonging to Islam would only come in 1963, it seems that when they were made subject to the Defense Service Law in 1956 this was done in virtue of the category "Druze." That a deal had been made between the Druze chiefs and the authorities before the law went into effect is suggested by the fact that from the start the community's *'uqqal* were never enlisted. Two months before the first Druze soldiers were to start their army duties, on 3 May, a protest began spreading in the Druze villages against the "deal" the chiefs had allegedly made. In petitions sent to the Prime Minister people spoke out against the law and claimed that since the Druzes were Arabs—who were never called up—it was not right that they should be enlisted.[67] The protest against the law intensified toward the end of 1956 when religious sheikhs began leading it, and Sheikh Farhud Qasim Farhud set out to organize a mass protest in all Druze villages.[68] On 22 March 1957, Sheikh Farhud wrote to the Ministries of the Interior, Foreign Affairs and Defense, and to the Speaker of the Knesset presenting them with a series of demands that later became the core of the political discourse carried on by those who were against obligatory military conscription.[69] Petitioners from the village of Abu Snan rejected the law "because it had been motivated by political considerations of some leaders who sought to be rewarded by the

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[66] Kretzmer, p. 36.
[67] SA C2214/125, Report of the Minorities Officers in the Haifa district March-April 1956.
[68] On Farhud's activities, see al-Qasim, pp. 33-34.
[69] SA FM 3751/21, Farhud Qasim Farhud and Salih Nasib Khayr to the Ministries and the Speaker of the Knesset, 22 March 1957.

authorities."[70] In 'Isfiya, the people opposed to the "deal" tried to meet Abba Hushi to launch their protest against the way in which the law had been applied to the Druzes.[71] The strongest opposition to the law came from Shafa'amr, the resident town of Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, where sixteen youngsters sent a petition to the Prime Minister asking him to reverse the decision, stressing again that Druzes, as Arabs, should be exempted from obligatory military service in the IDF. In almost all villages "a state of tension prevail[ed] covering the conscription" and part of the religious sheikhs were thinking of boycotting "the celebration of the feast of *al-nabi Shu'ayb* in protest against the obligatory conscription, say[ing] that a day of mourning not a feast day [should be held] because the conscription [was] unacceptable to the Druze faith."[72]

Generally speaking, many Druzes who opposed the Defense Service Law were motivated by economic rather than ideological reasons. Only a small group of educated people were attracted by Arab nationalism or had Communist leanings. The majority of the Druzes had little idea of nationalism—theirs was still a "face-to-face" community. And anyway, only with the growing impact of the mass media in the early 1950s and the rise in stature of Egypt's Jamal Abd al-Naser after the debacle of the Anglo-French-Israeli attack on that country in October 1956, did nationalism begin to spread more rapidly throughout the Arab Middle East.

The conscription law came into effect two months before the Sinai war. Druze soldiers all served in one single, separate army unit, Unit 300. From the outset, Unit 300 had mainly been serving along the border with Egypt in order to act against Palestinians trying to make it across from Gaza. It was among the army units assigned to "keep order in Gaza" when during the war Israel occupied Sinai and the Gaza Strip. Following the same principle, a second Druze unit, Unit 244, was established in the north in the late 1960s when there was an increase in Palestinian activities from Lebanon against Israel. Although by the late 1970s some of the IDF's regular units were opened up for them, until today Druzes are barred from all IDF elite units, including the air force

[70] SA C2214/125, petition from Abu Snan, 28 March 1957.

[71] AHA, letter signed by five villagers to Abba Ḥushi, 1 March 1957.

[72] See SA C2214/125, Report of the officer of the Department of the Adviser in the Galilee, March-April, 1956.

and, of course, the intelligence units, nor are they to be found among the higher-ranking military staff.

During the years 1948-1962 Israeli radio and press regularly used the terms "Druzes" and "Druze community" in order to emphasize that the state sees them as distinct from the country's other Arab communities, suggesting that the Ottomans and, after them, the British had never displayed much interest in encouraging the "independence" of the Druzes and thus reinforcing the image Israeli officials were creating of the community. In fact, if there was any change at all, it did not go beyond the declarative level and lacked legal relevance. The British had accepted the status quo which the Ottomans established in the 1880s when they appointed Sheikh Tarif Muhammad Tarif as Druze *qadi* for matters of marriage and divorce, while the religious leadership continued to be in the hands of the three leading families, Tarif, Mu'addi and Khayr, by virtue of custom but not sanctioned by any official document. Salman Tarif was appointed as *qadi* after his father's death in 1928 and remained the community's sole *qadi* until 1962, in which capacity he dealt only with marriage and divorce issues. When the Defense Service Law was applied to the Druzes in 1956 they still had the same legal status as the other Arabs, i.e., Muslims and Christians, in Israel which went back to the Ottoman Period. On 15 April 1957, ten days before the *ziyara* to the shrine of *al-nabi Shu'ayb*, the Minister of Religions signed a regulation that extended legal recognition to the Druzes as a religious community in accordance with the Religious Communities (Organization) Mandatory Ordinance of 1927, thereby making the Druze community legally independent vis-à-vis the Sunni-Muslim community.[73] The regulation was probably intended to give legal backing to separating the Druzes from the other Arabs in view of the Conscription Law of 1956. But it may also have formed part of the deal by which the Tarifs went along with that law in return for legalization by the authorities of their paramountcy among the other Druze chiefs.

It was Abba Ḥushi, who by now again had full monopoly over the way the Druze chiefs were dealt with, who supported this paramountcy. The Adviser for Minorities Affairs, Cabinet Ministers and the military authorities, too, recognized Abba Ḥushi's spe-

[73] See Nissim Dana, *The Druze, A Religious Community in Transition* (Jerusalem, 1980), pp. 62-63.

cial relationship with the Arab chiefs. As of 1957, to celebrate "Arab-Jewish brotherhood," Abba Ḥushi began inviting the Arab chiefs to a public garden on top of Mount Carmel. In addition to political speeches, the event featured "folk dancing and songs." Following the creation of the feast of Nabi Shu'ayb, and the abolition of the feast of Ramadan, "Druze" folk dancing could now also be found on the stage of what in Hebrew is called *Gan ha-Em*, "Mother's Garden."[74]

For Sheikh Amin Tarif, this event as well as the *ziyara* to Nabi Shu'ayb's shrine, whose program was also organized by Abba Ḥushi through the municipality of Haifa, were two annually recurring occasions to celebrate his triumph over those who had opposed him from the first years of the state, and it is not surprising that the way the lists of invitations to both events were made up led to friction among the Druze chiefs.[75] Abba Hushi became the intermediary for the chiefs as these themselves mediated between the authorities and many ordinary Druzes, as revealed by the dozens of letters addressed to Abba Hushi with requests for favors over the following years.[76]

"Legal recognition" as a separate community meant that the Druzes were given judicial autonomy in matters of personal status and *waqf* (pl. *awqāf*, religious endowments). This included the legal authority to establish its own independent religious institutions such as courts, *waqf* council, and *ri'assa ruhiyya* (religious

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[74] See Chapter 5 below, which details the attempts to create a separate "Druze folklore."

[75] AHA 13/B. For example, in one of the petitions sent to Abba Ḥushi by "families of Bait Jan" it says: "We inform you that [the participants in] the meeting which has been held in your [building of the municipality] concerning the selections of representatives of the Druze community for the *ziyara* of the honored prophet of God, *Shu'ayb*... do not represent the community. Assigning Najib Ali al-Yusuf as representative of the village of Bait Jan is inappropriate..."

[76] Ibid. The following are a few examples of such demands. Sheikh Amin Tarif to Abba Ḥushi, 20 May 1958 (asking to find a job for K.Y. Hinou of Julis), 23 October 1961 (asking to have Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi replaced by F. Tarif as responsible for the Histadrut office in Acre), 30 October 1962 (soliciting help to have A. Tarif accepted at the university); similar demands were addressed by Sheikh Jabar, 1 April 1958, 1 October 1958 (requests to help F.H. Ali obtaining a permit to open a shop in his village (Buqay'a) and to grant him a permit to buy from the Ata factory clothes at reduced prices), 26 June 1962 (asking to help N. Ghanim get into the Teachers Training College); poems praising Abba Ḥushi, 8 July 1955, 1 November 1956, 16 December 1956, 16 and 24 February 1962, 9 April 1962.

leadership). The latter, by virtue of custom, went to the three leading families Khayr, Mu'addi, and Tarif, with paramountcy held by the Tarifs. By most Israeli officials and Druzes Sheikh Amin was considered *al-ra'is al-ruhi* (the religious head) of the community in early 1954; the *awqāf* of the shrines were in the hands of Tarif family, while the *awqāf* in each village were in the hands of religious sheikhs elected by the *'uqqal* of the village. Legalization of the religious leadership only came on 2 November 1961 which also brought institutionalization of the *awqāf*. The *awqāf* of the shrines remain in control of the Tarif family. Except for the buildings of the *khilwas*, most *waqf* properties in the villages, however, such as lands, olive trees, oil presses and wheat mills, were sold in the 1960s and 1970s, with the revenues distributed among the *khilwa*s and shrines for building purposes.[77]

The religious courts did not begin to operate until 1962 because of three main obstacles all thrown up in the aftermath of the fourth Knesset elections of 11 March 1959 and the renewed competition to which these gave rise among the Druze chiefs: the way in which the judges were to be chosen; the question of their qualifications; and the matter of which law should be adopted. Since 1951 two chiefs, Jabr Mu'addi and Salih Khnayfis, had been rewarded for their collaborations with the ruling party. Backed by Abba Ḥushi and the ruling party's leaders, Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi preserved his place as candidate and was reelected for the third time. Abu Rukun had been waiting in the wings for a long time when in 1959 he replaced Sheikh Salih Khnayfis who, in disappointment, left MAPAI for Herut. As we already saw, until the early 1960s competition between chiefs could lead to chiefs shifting from one to another faction within the ruling party but never from MAPAI to any of the other Israeli parties. Sheikh Salih Khnayfis was the first to do so and from the 1970s onward until today moving one's allegiance across the political spectrum is characteristic of many Druze sheikhs.[78]

By the end of 1959, when a draft proposal of the Druze religious courts was still in preparation, rival chiefs began campaigning among Jewish officials to ensure a post within the planned

[77] DA, files on the Druze villages.

[78] Through a survey that set out to track how 15 clan chiefs shifted their political affiliations, I found that, apart from the Mansur chiefs who never left MAPAI, all other chiefs shifted to other Zionist parties at least once.

institutions for one of their clan members. However, the courts could not be established before it had been decided which law to adopt. A draft of this law was published on 23 May 1960, i.e., at a time when the religious leadership had yet to receive legal status. The draft maintained the status quo in matters of personal status, with Article 3 restricting the jurisdiction of the courts to marriage and divorce matters only. Article 5 proposed that a committee be established to elect the required judges, consisting of nine persons: the religious head of the Druze community, the Minister of Religions, the Minister of Justice, one governmental official elected by the government, two Members of the Knesset, a lawyer elected by the council of Israeli lawyers, one "senior Druze religious *'alim*," and another Druze religious *'alim* elected by "the Druze representatives." Regarding the qualification of the judges, the draft makes no mention of any special education, such as law study or even what should be the required minimal number of years of study for candidates.[79]

Although the law perpetuated the status quo by limiting the Druze judge's authority to matters of marriage and divorce only, a number of courts were expected to be established, calling for more than one judge. On 15 September 1960 Sheikh Amin Tarif sent his reservations to the Minister of Religions with a copy two days later to Abba Hushi whom he asked for advice on the draft of the law.[80] Sheikh Amin was opposed to the way the election committee was composed and to the courts' jurisdiction being limited to marriage and divorce:

> As is well known, the Druze community in Israel has no Law of Personal Status and neither did it have one in the Mandatory period... This makes it necessary to adopt the Law of Personal Status of the Druze community in Lebanon, with some modifications because of the [judicial] situation in Israel.

As to the committee, Sheikh Amin opposed the inclusion of two Druze *'ulama*:

> The draft gives no definition of these two *'ulama*. Who is the Druze *'alim* and according to what yardstick is he to be considered *'alim*? It is well known that none of the Druze sheikhs in Israel graduated from any religious university or a secondary school...nor do they have

[79] *Government Gazette* (No. 422), 23 May 1960.
[80] AHA 13/A, Sheikh Amin Tarif to Abba Ḥushi, 17 September 1960.

> a certificate even of an elementary school. Therefore, among all the Druzes of Israel there is no one who could be described as Druze religious *'alim*, either senior or junior.

Because the Druzes had never legally been organized as a separate community, they had no official representatives. The proposed committee "would introduce communal and personal quarrels... I do not think that the government has any intention with this law to sow the seeds of division among the Druzes."[81]

Sheikh Amin Tarif's intention here, as so often, was to exclude as much as possible other religious sheikhs from having any influence on the procedures—since none had indeed studied at places such as Cairo's al-Azhar, no Druze could perhaps be described as an *'alim* but many had of course followed religious training in the *khilwas* of the Druze community itself.

The authorities appear to have given Sheikh Amin's observations due consideration. But legalizing the Druze institutions was postponed again when the Knesset was dissolved and the elections that followed on 15 August 1961 reduced the number of Druze Knesset members to one, which in turn required a redistribution of posts and benefits among the chiefs. In the end, the law Lebanon's Druzes adhered to was adopted and the authorities excluded "the Druze *'ulama*" from being members of the committee. A further success was the legal status granted to a "religious council," which the authorities accorded in October to *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* (the religious leadership) with its traditional composition of Sheikh Amin as *al-ra'is al-ruhi*, and Sheikhs Kamal Mu'addi and Ahmad Khayr as members. It seems that Abba Hushi was involved in the whole process of the legalization of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* and had certainly been advising Sheikh Amin when he formulated his ideas on the legalization of both the Druze religious council and the courts. Soon after, Abba Ḥushi sent his congratulations to the council's three members.[82]

Because the legalization of the religious leadership preserved the status quo, it was accepted by most clan chiefs. It was around the posts of judges—though there were to be only six: three for a first instance court and three for an appeals court—that compe-

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[81] Ibid., Sheikh Amin Tarif, "Comments on the Draft of the Law of the Druze Religious Courts," 15 September 1960.

[82] Ibid., Sheikh Ahmad Mayrs to Abba Ḥushi, 10 November 1961.

tition erupted among them. Those who knew that the number of the posts was limited and that they had no prospect of obtaining one, demanded an alternative post as reward. Again Abba Ḥushi was the address they came to. The lion's share of the posts resulting from the legalization of the religious institutions went to the Tarif family. The *awqāf* of the shrines were put directly under the control of Sheikh Amin as *al-ra'is al-ruhi*. Appointed as one of the three judges of the lower court was Sheikh Salman Tarif. Since the law of the religious court stipulated that the members of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* were to serve *ex officio* as the judges of the appeals court, Sheikh Amin automatically became the head of this court and Sheikh Kamal Mu'addi and Sheikh Ahmad Khayr its two other members. This meant that only two posts remained vacant in the lower court. One of them went to Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun, who had lost his seat in the fourth Knesset following the elections. Since, as we saw above, Salih Knayfis' relations with the ruling party had soured to the extent that he had joined the opposition (Herut), the easiest way to "punish" him was to appoint his colleague Husayn 'Ilayan, of Shafa'amr, who in 1948 had helped the Jewish Security Services reach an agreement with Wahhab's Druze battalion.[83]

In October, with the Knesset's elections two months in the past and *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* legally established, Sheikh Amin Tarif set out to reconcile himself with his relative Farhan Tarif who since 1949 had been protesting against the "monopoly over Druze affairs" of Sheikh Amin's branch of the family. Among other things he asked Abba Ḥushi to find Farhan Tarif a suitable post. Addressing Abba Ḥushi as "the person for the Arabs," Sheikh Amin wrote:

> When I visited your... house in the aftermath of the elections, I solicited your help to get our cousin Farhan Tarif appointed as head of the party's office in Acre instead of Sheikh Jabr ... because he [Farhan] had never obtained anything in the name of the Tarif family.[84]

On the eve of the elections of 1961, Kamal Mansur, son of Sheikh Najib, had failed to replace Sheikh Jabr as the Druze candidate for the ruling party. On 4 November, Sheikh Najib asked Abba

[83] See above, Chapter Two, p. 53.
[84] AHA 13/B, Sheikh Amin Tarif to Abba Ḥushi, 23 October 1961.

Ḥushi to give his support to the appointment of one of the Mansurs' religious sheikhs in the lower court:

> In this letter we are demanding the legitimate rights of the Mansur family to be presented in the organizations [of the community], due to its renown as a religious family... We demand (1) to include a candidate from the Mansur family as judge to the Carmel; (2) to include in the council of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* one representative of the Mansur family...which has proven its loyalty to MAPAI even in hard times.[85]

Abba Ḥushi began receiving many such letters as of 1960, though there were, of course, nuances in the arguments and justifications of the demands made. For example, on 23 July 1960 Sheikh Salman Madi, of Julis, one of those who opposed the "monopoly of the Tarif family over Druze affairs," wrote Abba Hushi two letters in which he demanded that a Druze council of thirty-five representatives be established democratically, which was then to elect three judges and five members of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya.* This latter institution was also to elect *al-ra'is al-ruhi.* In his second letter, Sheikh Salman Madi hinted at his own personal "qualifications" for the job in view of his experience of thirty-six years in Druze affairs.[86] Sheikh Najib Ali Yusuf al-As'ad, of Bait Jan, argued that the judges of the courts should represent the three districts of the Carmel, the *Sahil* (Western Galilee), and the *Jabl* (Upper Galilee, where his village was situated).[87] The chiefs of the Halabi family in Daliat al-Carmel were disappointed to find that in 1962 they had been excluded entirely from the new organizations of the community even though they formed the largest family in Israel: "Our family has already preserved its positions and has always been represented in the social, political and religious institutions within the country and abroad [Syria and Lebanon] because it is the largest Druze family in the world." The chiefs of the Halabis were deeply resentful of MAPAI which seemed to add insult to injury by appointing Amal Nasr al-Din as secretary of the Histadrut following the elections of 1961.[88]

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[85] Ibid., Sheikh Najib Mansur to Abba Hushi, 4 November 1961.
[86] Ibid., two letters of Sheikh Salman Madi to Abba Ḥushi, 23 July 1960.
[87] Ibid., Sheikh Naji Alial-As'ad to Abba Ḥushi, 9 November 1961.
[88] Ibid., chiefs of Halabi family to Abba Ḥushi, 15 December 1962.

### *... and a "New Nationality"*

The establishment of the Druze religious courts completed the process, begun in 1956, whereby the Druzes obtained formal status as a separate ethno-religious community. In Israeli government publications and in the media the event, seemingly the rightful counterpart of the Defense Service Law being extended to the Druzes, was hailed as "the great achievement of the Druzes being granted equality in Israel."[89] In actual fact, the government continued to deal with the Druzes as it did with the Muslim and Christian Arabs, i.e., through the Office of the Prime Minister's Adviser for Minorities Affairs which functioned as the intermediary for the "Arab Departments" at the various ministries. Nor was there a change for Druzes when it came to rules stating, for example, that no Arab belonging to MAPAI could be given full party membership or had the right even to carry a membership card, and that no Arabs were allowed on any of the party's national committees and councils. The Histadrut continued to deal with the Druzes through the separate "Arab offices" it maintained for "Arab affairs." In other words, their new formal status brought the Druzes no closer to integration into the ministerial offices that dealt with the wider Jewish society. Nor did it mean an increase in government allocations to Druze Local Authorities or social economic and educational institutions (from the start government expenditure on Israel's Arab population was critically inferior to the funds that went to its Jewish population). By not going beyond religious matters, legalization of their status left entirely untouched the—far more crucial—civic, economic and political aspects of the relationship between the Druzes and the state. No less significant, it enabled the government to move ahead and drive a further wedge between the Druzes and the country's Muslim and Christian Arabs—through the creation of a separate Druze "nationality."

It was the purposeful ambiguity in the way the authorities used the Hebrew and Arabic equivalents for "nationality" and "citizenship," as we saw above, that facilitated the introduction of this new

[89] Anticipating the appointment of the judges, Salman Falah wrote that such an achievement could only have been accomplished in Israel; *al-Yaum*, 17 April 1962. Again, when the judges of the Court of Appeal were appointed, he praised the Israeli government policy for having granted the Druzes independence; *al-Yaum*, 12 March 1963.

"Druze nationality." Not long after their "formal status" had been legalized, the Interior Ministry began issuing identity cards to the Druzes on which "nationality [*le'um, qawmiyya*]: Arab" was replaced by "nationality [*le'um, qawmiyya*]: Druze." As with the implementation of the Defense Service Law, when and where the decision to do so had been made or who had made it cannot be traced in any of the official Israeli documents and it remains difficult to ascertain whether it, too, was part of any deal struck previously between the Druze chiefs and the Israeli authorities. It may well have been.

The first big opportunity to celebrate the "great achievement" of their new status came with the *ziyara* to *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb* in April 1964, when also the new buildings on the site of the shrine were inaugurated that Sheikh Amin had been busy erecting immediately following the legal recognition of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya*.[90] The Druze Unit in the IDF had been celebrating the *ziyara* by holding a military parade since 1949, but the *ziyara* of April 1964 still lingers in the memory of many Druzes as "exceptional." There is a photo of Sheikh Amin accompanied by the Druze judges Kamal Mu'addi, Husayn Ilayan, Labib Abu Rukun and Ahmad Khayr, and by Druze Knesset Member Jabr Mu'addi passing in between two rows of Druze soldiers serving in the IDF, which till today can be found in many official Druze buildings and homes in Israel. It is also popular with many Israeli Jews for the way it combines the traditional dress of the sheikhs and the military uniform of the IDF and thus seems neatly to symbolize the "independence" the Druze community had been given in reward for its "positive" attitude towards the Jewish state.[91]

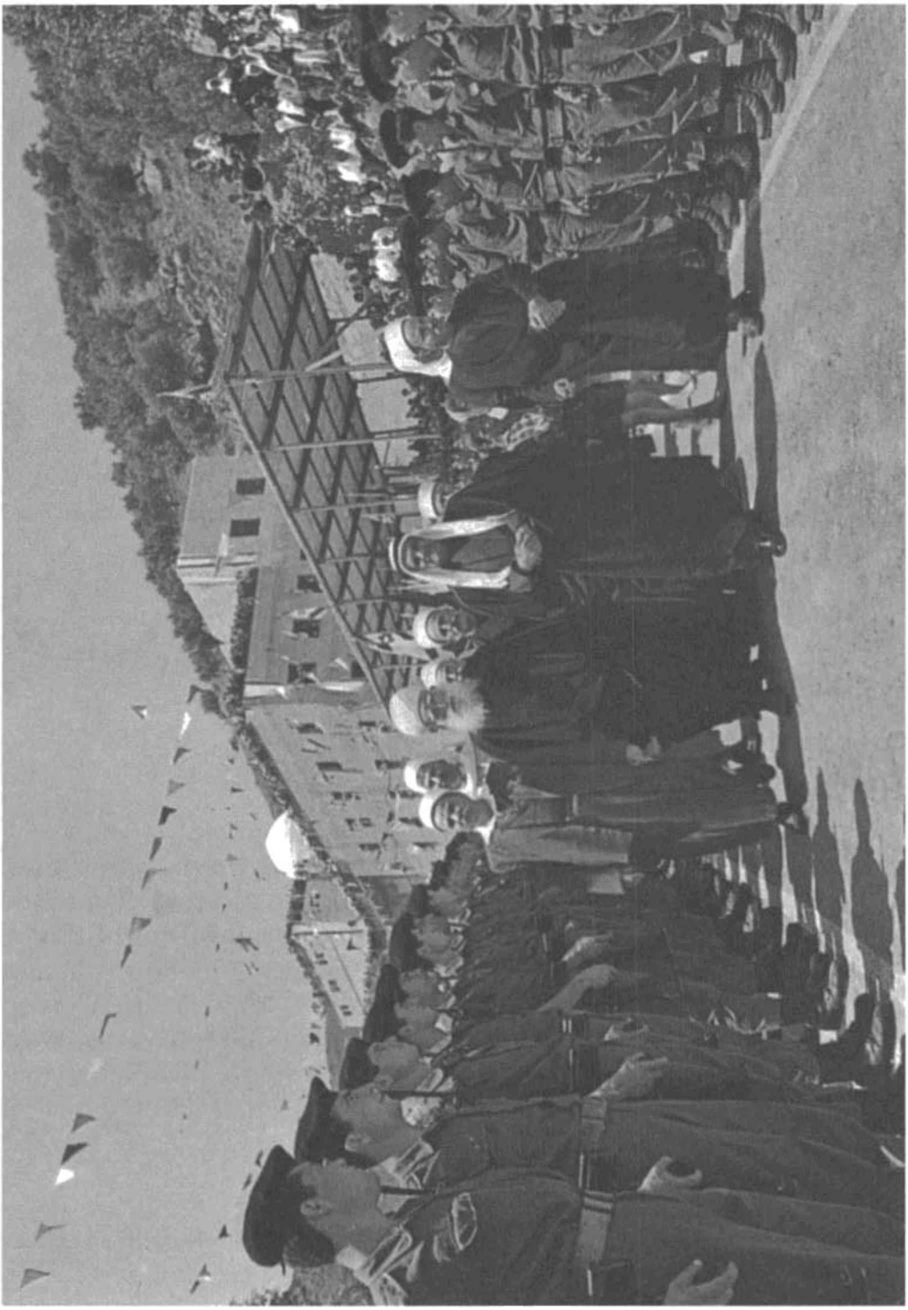
### *Dissenting Voices*

At the *ziyara* of 24 April 1962 Yitzhak Ben Zvi congratulated the Druze community in the following words: "The state of Israel re-

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[90] AHA, 13/B, Sheikh Amin to Abba Ḥushi, 9 July 1962, asking Abba Hushi's assistance in having one of the municipality's engineers sent to the shrine in order to supervise the building projects. Construction of new buildings in the shrine usually went on without plans and without any professional supervision of engineers.

[91] The photo featured prominently in many Israeli publications on the Druze community; see, for example, *al-Huda*, 4, April 1972, and the cover of Salman Faraj's book, *Marahil Tatawur al-Mujtama' al-Durzi fi Isra'il* (Tarshiha [Israel] 1992).



The *ziyara* at *maqam al-nabi Shu'ayb*, April 1964 (see text, p. 168).

moved a discrimination that had affected the Druzes for a long time when in 1957 it declared their juridical equality."[92] Two years later, on 8 March 1964, a Druze delegation led by Sheikh Amin Tarif met the President of the state, Zalman Shazar, in order to thank him and the State of Israel for having granted the Druzes their legal independence and to invite him to join the Druzes in the celebration of the *ziyara* at *maqam al nabi Shu'ayb* in April.[93]

But by now new winds of protest were blowing within the community, with teachers and students organizing themselves as an "alternative elite" bent on playing an active role in the community's internal affairs and reshaping its relations with the authorities. As we saw, an earlier attempt of the Druze teachers in 1955-57 had come to naught when following the resignation of their main activist, Nadim al-Qasim, they decided to limit their activities purely to educational problems. In the late 1950s the eight Druzes who were studying at the University of Jerusalem, Nasib Shannan, Kamal Khayr, Hamad Sa'b, Adib Husayn, Salman Falah, Sa'id al-Qasim, Yusuf Isma'il and, of course, Nadim al-Qasim, were calling for elected Druze communal councils and for religious courts whose judges would be Druze lawyers. This attempt was aborted by Druze Knesset Members and by the tactics of the authorities who by tempting some of them with offers of official jobs succeeded in creating internal division among the group.[94]

In January 1959 school teachers set up an organization, called *Harakat al-Nahda al-Durziyya*, whose aim was to "improve relations with the state" through efforts by people who counted themselves among the Druze intelligentsia, and without involving the clan chiefs of the community.[95] Further attempts at creating change followed later in the year when ex-soldiers together with other young people in the Druze villages set up organizations that were active toward the extension of full civic rights. In Buqay'a, for

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[92] Ministry of Education, *al-Nabi Shu'ayb alayhi al-Salam*, a reading booklet for Druze pupils in classes four to eight (Jerusalem 1964), p. 10.

[93] Ibid., pp. 7-8. The delegation comprised the six Druze judges, the Druze Member of Knesset, Jabr Mu'addi, and Kamal Mansur who became Adviser to the President of Israel at the end of the 1960s.

[94] See Faraj, *Marahil*, pp. 80-81.

[95] Ibid., *Harakat al-Nahda al-Durziyya*, letters of 13 and 18 January 1959. The organizer of this group was the teacher Faris Falah who later left his job in order to study law. In October 1969 he became the first Druze judge to take office in Israeli courts.

example, such a group, established on 16 May at the initiative of Salih Suayd, soon included about one hundred members. They voiced criticism of the community's chiefs and called for equal rights but steered clear of the dispute about "Druze identity" that had erupted among educated Druzes. One of the group's founders, Naif Salim Suayd, and a few other members were Communist activists who were in favor of Arab nationalism and stressed the Palestinian roots of the Druzes.[96]

In July 1960, Samih al-Qasim, who was to become one of the foremost Palestinian poets, was put in jail for refusing to enlist in the Israeli army.[97] Samih's arrest deepened the disputes about Druze identity, including military service, Druze separatism and Druze "nationality." In that same month, the Jewish editor of the government's Arabic newspaper *al-Yaum*, Nissim Rajwan, began a series of what he called "historical" articles on the "anniversary of the massacres of the year 1860" in Lebanon which he portrayed as a result of the "confessional war between the Druzes and the Christians." The timing of the articles just when the process of separating the Druzes from the other Arabs in Israel was in full swing, made many Arab-Palestinian intellectuals, among them the poets Rashid Husayn and Fawzi al-Asmar and the novelist Na'im Makhul, suspicious of Rajwan as an advocate of the policy of "divide and rule" the Israelis were applying to the Arab communities in the country. The debate moved on to include the problem of national identity when educated Druzes such as Salman Shihadi and Nadim al-Qasim joined in.[98]

By late 1960 *al-Yaum* seemed to have succeeded in mobilizing some of their Druze correspondents in the debate on the Druze national identity to attack, under pseudonyms, what they called the "interference" of the non-Druze intellectuals in the "internal debate" of the Druzes. Although it is not sure that all these pseudonyms were of Druzes (some, as Rajwan himself, may have been of Jews), Shafiq Mansur, one of the correspondents of *al-Yaum* active since the early 1950s, emphasized "*al-shu'ur al-khas*," the

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[96] DA, Shuayl Farraj collection, *Munazamat al-Junud al-Musarahin*, sessions of 16, 18, 30 May 1959; 14, 17, 20, 27 June 1959; 4 July 1959 and the correspondence of Salih Suayd with the officials.

[97] *al-Mirsad*, 14 July 1960; al-Qasim, pp. 35-36.

[98] *al-Yaum*, 19 July 1960, *al-Mirsad*, 29 July 1960 and 15, 20 July 1960. See also al-Qais, pp. 36-37.

particularist feelings of the Druzes.[99] In early 1961, with the chiefs fully preoccupied by trying to get official posts for themselves in the new Druze institutions, Druze intellectuals stepped up their efforts to halt what Nadim al-Qasim called their "imposturous and flattering" attitude. Nadim al-Qasim invited dozens of Druzes to a general meeting on problems of the Druze community which was held in Acre on 28 May 1961 and led to the establishment of *Munazamat al-Shabab al-Duruz* (the Druze Youth Organization).[100] In the speech he held at the meeting, al-Qasim criticized the educated youth of the community for their indifference which allowed the chiefs to dominate the stage of Druze politics "by spreading corruption and issuing shameful political declarations that damage the Druze dignity for no other reason than their own selfish interests." Referring to the separation of the Druzes and the debate on the Druze national identity, he strongly spoke out in favor of the Arabism of the Druzes which was reinforced "by origin, language, geography and history."[101]

The Druze Youth Organization survived until the end of 1964, with branches in some of the Druze villages.[102] The organization itself was politically heterogeneous and its statutes comprised the general goals of the Druze youth at that period.[103] Nadim al-Qasim's group succeeded in launching its own agenda from within this organization which set out four goals: to deprive the clan chiefs of the monopoly they held on Druze affairs, "to liberate" the Druze *awqāf* and use them "for the benefit of the whole community," to open cultural clubs, and to have the compulsory military service abolished.[104]

When towards the end of 1961 the Minister of Religions appointed the members of *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* to an institution called *al-*

[99] *al-Yaum*, 1 to 30 October 1960. Shafiq Mansur is still working as correspondent of the Israeli radio in Arabic.

[100] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection, *Munazamat al-Shabab al-Durzi*, circular of 17 March 1963 (documents of this organization are lost except for the few Farraj was able to trace in the private papers of Salih Suyad of Buqay'a and Munir Faris of Hurfayish).

[101] A summary of al-Qasim's speech appeared in *al-Mirsad*, 15 June 1961.

[102] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection. The only documents from the branches in the villages were found in Buqay'a among the private papers of Salih Suyad.

[103] Ibid., "The Statutes of the Organization" (n. d); the goals of the organizers were to strive for equality, to promote higher education for both young men and women, and to establish economic institutions in the villages.

[104] See Faraj, *Marahil*, p. 81.

*majlis al-dini* (religious council), the Druze students in Jerusalem, most of them belonging to the new Druze Youth Organization, distributed leaflets condemning this as an act of intervention in the religious affairs of the Druzes. The way the religious council was established was bound to create dependency of its members on the authorities:

> On 27 October 1961 and in accordance with the regulation of organizing the Druze community, the Minister of Religions appointed a religious council for the community... Because this is an act of intervention in our religious affairs ... many have written to the authorities rejecting it. This regulation that grants the Minister of Religions the authority to appoint the religious council (*al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya*) means that the religious council is no more than an official post like any governmental post granted by the concerned ministries, compelling the council to conduct a policy that will be planned by the authorities... We think that the religious council should be independent... elected only by the Druze community.

The students encouraged all Druzes to support their demands to have the new regulation "imposed by the Minister" abolished.[105]

It did not take long for the Druze Youth Organization to split into two groups, those who wanted to join the other Arab communities in the struggle against the Military Government and the "confiscation of lands," and those who wanted to concentrate their "struggle on real and not just formal equality" for the Druzes in Israel. Thus we find branches of the organization in the villages busy in the elections of their representatives and organizing their local institutions,[106] while the Jerusalem group led by Nadim al-Qasim became very active in mobilizing the Druze community against the legalization of the Druze religious courts and the separation of the Druzes from the other Arabs. Al-Qasim's group met in April with a number of Knesset members in order to solicit, on the whole in vain, their support.[107] In July 1962, when the new identity cards were being issued, the group launched a campaign against the authorities without consulting the full assembly of their

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[105] DA, file "The Religious Courts," circular (n.d.) signed by ten students, among them Nadim al-Qasim, Adib Husayn, Nasib Shanna, Muhammad Sirhan and Sirhan Sirhan.

[106] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection, *Munazamat al-Shahab al-Druze*, Buqay'a's branch, sessions of 13 December 1961, 19 May 1962, 1 June 1962, 19 and 29 May 1963. The same occurred in 'Isfiya and Abu Snan.

[107] *al-Itihad*, 20 April 1962; see also N. al-Qasim, p. 40.

organization, perhaps in order to avoid debates between themselves and those then suspected of collaborating with the authorities or not daring to take action against the official policy. On 27 July and again on 3 August Nadim al-Qasim and his colleagues published leaflets condemning the Interior Ministry for registering on Druze identity cards an entirely "new, invented nationality,"[108] while addressing a petition to the Minister:

> We call your attention to the strange behavior your Ministry has displayed recently when it began changing the nationality of the members of the Druze community from Arab to a new strange nationality, that is "Druze nationality." We see this as a new step in the direction of separating the Druze community from the other Arab communities. It is a known fact that Druzism is a religious sect and that the nationality of the Druzes is the Arab nationality. We strongly protest against this illegal behavior through which you are obfuscating reality and history, and we consider this as an infringement of our rights and as an offense to our dignity. We demand that you stop and desist from this kind of conduct.[109]

Two months after the establishment of the Druze Youth Organization the government newspaper *al-Yaum*, now made compulsory reading for Arab teachers, started a special section dedicated to the "newly created nation" of the Druzes. Called *Manbar al-muwatinin al-Duruz* (The Stage of the Druze Citizens), it was edited by Salman Falah, who was among the first Druzes to graduate and who later in 1967 was to become inspector in the Ministry of Education and then, in 1975, Director of a separate Druze Educational Department. It would appear that *Manbar* was meant to compete with *al-Itihad* and *al-Jadid* of the Communists and *al-Mirsad* and *al-Fajr* of the Zionist left-wing party, MAPAM, where many educated Druze were finding a platform for their protests against the authorities and the clan chiefs of the community. In its first issue, of 12 July 1961, Falah defined the goals of *Manbar* as "an instrument to deal with our own affairs, to present the glorious deeds of our ancestors and to show the members of our nation their glorious past and history."[110]

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[108] *al-Itihad*, 27 July 1962, and *al-Mirsad*, 3 August 1962.

[109] *al-Mirsad*, 10 August 1962; N. al-Qasim, p. 41.

[110] Salman Falah, *Hadith al-Thalatha* (publication of *al-Huda*, Haifa 1977), p. 15. The title of the book is borrowed from the Egyptian author Taha Husayn's *Hadith al-Irbi'a'*. Fallah's book is a collection of articles he published in *Manbar* between 1961 to 1963.

Thus it was set up to foster among the Druzes a feeling that they were "special" and to prevent them from "melting with other [Arabs]."[111] The authorities meanwhile continued to substitute "Druze nationality" for "Arab" on the ID cards, encouraging the Druzes to come to the Interior Ministry's offices by declaring that any Druze who exchanged his or her old ID card for a new one would no longer be subject to the restrictions of the Military Government but free to circulate in any part of Israel, i.e., without needing the official permit of the Military Governor. Members of the Druze Youth Organization studying in Jerusalem immediately protested to the Knesset's Law Committee against "the official pressure to compel them [the Druzes] ... to replace their nationality ... by offering them free circulation without a military permit."[112]

The beginning of 1963 saw the Arabs in Israel intensifying their struggle against the Military Government, which reverberated among the Druzes belonging to the Youth Organization. One of them, 'Afif 'Azzam, went so far as to suggest they try to mobilize the Druzes against the Military Government and join the other Arab communities in the struggle. But the division in the organization by now was evident—some of its members, though they covered their intention in ideology, were simply biding time till they could take up the new jobs they had been offered by the authorities. 'Afif 'Azam explained the "ideological" division within the Organization in materialistic terms as masking a split between those who were seeking "governmental posts to establish themselves within the Druze elite" and those who were economically independent, concluding that "a stable income and economic independence are [useful] weapons in the fight against discrimination."[113] The correspondence that went on between Sami Kayuf, the secretary of the Organization, and some of its members and ex-members during the second half of 1964 clearly reveals why it was virtually impossible for Druze youth to organize themselves in the face of clan chiefs who had the backing of the authorities.[114]

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[111] Ibid., p.16.

[112] *al-Itihad*, 13 November 1962; see also N. al-Qasim, p. 42.

[113] Ibid., S. Farraj collection, *Munazamat al-Shabab al-Duruz*, 'Afif 'Azzam to the members of the central bureau of the Organization of Druze Youth, 20 February 1963, 'Afif 'Azzam to Munir Faris, 1 May 1963. The quotation is from the latter.

[114] Ibid., for examples: letters from Sabri 'Ammar, Sulayman (Julis), Sulayman

According to Salman Faraj, that the first serious organization failed "to reach its goals" was because of the power the religious and traditional leadership still had in the community and because of the harassment of the Shin Bet against members who refused to do military service.[115]

The protocols of the sessions of the "Department of the Planning and Research" of the Ministry of Defense in which the Shin Bet, the Adviser for Minorities Affairs, the police, and the Military Government decided on the official future policy towards the Arabs, reveal that in 1962 the Druze Youth Organization was one of the Arab organizations the Department sought to do away with. In the words of the Shin Bet representative: "We see the phenomenon of socio-political organization of the Arab minority as a security problem of the first order.... It is not necessarily an underground [organization] ... but every group of men with a common goal and an [organizational] apparatus constitutes a threat of the first order."[116] Referring to the activities of Nadim al-Qasim and the other Arab students in Jerusalem, the same representative saw them as candidates of a future Arab elite who, if they were allowed to organize themselves, could foster among the Arabs a "national consciousness." Until 1962, the Arabs in Israel had not been a homogeneous group with a shared nationalist consciousness; although there were small groups of activists, the majority of the Arab residents "are preoccupied with economic problems" rather than with politics. About the "loyalty" of the Druze community to the Jewish state he repeated the idea so many Israeli officials subscribed to at that period, namely that the Druzes

> have a tradition of collaborating with the ruler. They have a witty [*sic*] proverb, "when they come towards you, you welcome them with the flag and when they leave you transform the flag into a sword." Dissatisfaction exists, but it is not against a national background ... but one of a struggle between the generation [who make up] the present leadership and the younger generation which has completed its military service and wants to acquire a position of power for itself. This is a process of decline for the current patriarchal order. The organization of the youths has nothing to do with the political

'Azzam (Abu Snan), Kamil Dabbur (Bait Jan), Faris Rafah (Kufr Smai') to Sami Kayuf, 7 June 1964, Sami Kayuf's response, 10 and 15 June 1964; K. Dabur, S. 'Azzam, F. Falah, Sulayman Imbda (Yarka) and S. 'Ammar to S. Kayuf, 21 June 1964, S. Kayuf to Munir Faris, 12 June 1964.

[115] Faraj, *Marahil*, p. 82.

[116] SA FM 3413/3, Top secret, session of 2 July 1962, p. 1.

> situation in Israel though here and there there is some blossoming [in that direction]. The conscription to IDF is an interesting factor. Many young Druzes do not want to be conscripted because it limits their possibilities of making money. Here and there objection to serve in the army stems from some aspect of [national feeling].

Summarizing the Druze position, he concluded: "It does not mean that we can consider the community as loyal, [it means that] the question of security to the state is, at present, on the whole very good."[117]

On 7 May 1962 the Shin Bet provided the Department of Planning and Research of the IDF with a long report on "the political, communal and social organizations among the Arab minority" in which it set out to portray how Arab political organizations in Israel had developed since 1948. Apart from the Israeli Communist Party (MAKI) which was recognized since the establishment of Israel, and an abortive attempt by lawyer Ilias Kusa to organize, in 1954, an Arab Israeli Party, most Arab political organizations emerged during the years 1957 to 1961. For example, the Popular Front, established at the end of 1957, comprised Arab communists and nationalists. The report mentions that as a result of measures taken by the Israeli authorities the organizers withdrew and in July 1958 the Popular Front was replaced by the Arab Front whose communists tried to mobilize leading figures in the Arab communities who were considered "moderates." When following the war of 1956 and the unification of Egypt and Syria, Naser, as President of the United Arab Republic, became the leader of the nationalists throughout the Arab world, a split occurred between communists and nationalists in Israel, and a nationalist factor within the Front founded *al-Ard* ("the Earth"). Its activists were soon arrested and the movement was subsequently outlawed by the Israeli court. By the end of 1961 MAKI succeeded in establishing a Jewish-Arab Committee for Abolishing the Military Government whose activists in 1962 intensified the struggle against the restrictions of the Military Government.[118]

The Shin Bet report reserved a special place for the Arab students in Jerusalem, as we saw, whom it considered as the future

[117] Ibid., pp. 14, 17-18.

[118] Ibid., Report on "The Political, Communal, and Social Organizations among the Arab Minority" in Israel, 7 May 1962, pp. 1-8.

elite of Israel's Arabs, more militant than either communists or nationalists of the present elite. It then goes on:

> Among the Arab intelligentsia dissatisfaction prevails. Most of the Arab intellectuals, including secondary-school graduates, have been detached psychologically from their social village environment and they are seeking employment in administration and education. Because the possibilities to absorb them in these areas are limited a grievance against the authorities has been spreading among them, even the Arab intellectuals who did manage to get appropriate jobs feel they are being discriminated vis-à-vis the Jews.[119]

Characteristically, the report neglects to mention that the economic development of the Arab villages during the 1950s and 1960s had pushed most Arab villagers onto the Israeli labor market because of the limited government budgets that reached these villages and because most of their agricultural lands had been confiscated. Still, it did foresee the role educated Arabs were to play as of the 1970s and the shift in the Arab elites this introduced.

The Druze intellectuals in the late 1950s and 1960s, although they shared the same process of politicization as their Christian and Muslim counterparts following the emergence of Arab nationalism and partially joined the above-mentioned organizations, were unable to play the same role and failed to undermine the domination of the traditional elite. There are two reasons why this should be so. First, their number was small: all in all there were only ten Druze university students and ninety-four Druze teachers, while there were one hundred university students and more than one thousand three hundred teachers among the other Arab communities.[120] While most of the Druze students and high school graduates were able to find employment in the education system of their villages, where there was a lack of teachers, the Arab intelligentsia had great difficulty finding jobs in their villages, and thus were bound to be more active politically. Second, the policy of the Military Government and the Shin Bet was to prevent the "negative forces" among the Arab intelligentsia from getting government jobs, especially in education. The absorption of the Druzes within the educational system was directed by the hidden hand

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[119] Ibid., p. 10.

[120] Ibid., p. 8. The number of teachers is based on "Report of the Ministry of Education, provided for the Department of Planning and Research," March 1962 (also in SA FM 3413/3).

of the Shin Bet guaranteeing that this "intelligentsia" would not replace a leadership that was cooperative and pliable. For the Druzes "there is a recognized leadership consisting of the elders of the community... though recently a grievance emerged among the Druze youths, intellectuals and ex-soldiers who are seeking to also play a part in the leadership of the community. A meeting of Druze youth was held in June 1961 which elected a committee to work for improvement in the Druze community's situation."[121]

*Toward Integration?*

Entitled "Advice on How to Treat the Arab Minority," another Shin Bet report of the same year does go into the economic development and the process of modernization the Arabs in Israel were undergoing but sees them as

> the beginning of a social revolution... reflected in the decline in influence of the old leadership and the rise of a new one from among the teachers, clerks, and small farmers who have grown up in the state of Israel. The exclusive influence of the sheikhs-*mukhtar*s and the chiefs of the clans has begun to diminish.... This development is inevitable, despite the possibilities [we have] of slowing down its stages, through our policy of communal and clan division and through other artificial means.... Over the last ten years the policy of the government has been to divide the Arab population into communities and areas by harnessing interests to these two issues. The sectarian policy and the clan division in the villages actively prevented the crystallization of the Arab population into one single entity.[122]

In order to spell out a new, effective counter policy, the report pointed first to the four main political changes that, in the mind of its author, had taken place since the establishment of the state:

> (1) The Arabs have learnt that [Israeli] rule is based on law, justice and complete freedom of expression and they have learned how to exploit this in a negative way. This knowledge gradually removed the fear that had taken hold of them during the early days of the state; (2) The fatal criticism and defamation of the Military Government that have been leveled for the past ten years for party inter-

[121] Ibid., Report on "The Political, Communal, and Social Organization among the Arab Minority in Israel,' 7 May 1962.

[122] AHA, Top secret report, "Advice on How to Treat the Arab Minority in Israel" (no exact date, 1962), pp. 3-4.

> ests and demagogic considerations in the press and even from the roster of the Knesset have significantly reduced the respectful awe and fear for the [Military] Government; (3) During the first years... the Military Government was responsible for almost the whole official treatment of the Arab citizens and operated as an intermediary between the population and the authorities. In addition, the system of permits and closed zones created an absolute dependency of each citizen within these zones on the Military Government. In the course of the years the situation gradually changed. [Government] offices became better organized and began to treat the Arab population directly, while the system of permits was slowly set aside. Thus, when the recent ease in restrictions [since 1958] was adopted, soon the everyday dependency of the Arabs on the Military Government no longer existed; (4) As mentioned above ... competitors emerged to face the established leadership and today it is no longer possible to control the Arab public through a small number of men [chiefs]. This geopolitical situation... necessitates that the Arab population in the state remains tied by organizational, public and economic strings to the ruling party, whichever it be.[123]

According to the author of the report, the policy toward the Arabs at the beginning of the 1960s

> has reached a crossroads and [the authorities] must decide on which measures to take in order to slow down the process [of radicalization] which is bound to introduce security threats.... Thus, the required conclusion is to aspire to a situation whereby the majority of the Arab population will be relieved as much as possible from pressing demands and feelings of dissatisfaction, on the one hand, and become integrated in the life of the state on the other, so as to minimize the danger of their self-crystallization.... Together with implementing the proposed policy, it is necessary to exhaust every possibility that the policy of sectarian [division] offers us which in the past has yielded fruit and succeeded in creating barriers—though sometimes artificial—between certain parts of the Arab population, such as the breakdown of the trust between the Druze community and the other Arab communities. Since it was first introduced, this policy has allowed us to prevent the Arab minority from coalescing into one united body by causing the leaders of each community to be preoccupied largely by sectarian affairs and not by general Arab affairs.[124]

In other words, the Israelis were conducting a policy which was meant to depoliticize the "national dimension" of ethnic issues by politicizing the "sectarian dimension" of these issues. Two means

[123] Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[124] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

were used where the Druze community was concerned. The first was to ensure that the framework of the relations between the state and the chiefs remained in place as the main instrument through which the authorities could promote their Druze policy, and the second was to direct the new Druze generation toward sectarian activities, by exerting economic and political pressure on those who otherwise might join the other Arab communities in their political struggle against the "confiscations of lands" or against the Military Government. Organizations such as that of the Druze Youth could be tolerated neither from the point of view of the authorities, because they stimulated youngsters to involve themselves in non-sectarian political activities,[125] nor from the point of view of the chiefs, because they challenged their domination of all Druze affairs. The Druze chiefs could and did use the declaration by the religious leadership that the Druze faith does not permit the establishment of organizations, societies and clubs because the Druzes are already completely organized by their communal life, notably when during the *ziyara* to the shrine of *al-nabi Shu'ayb* in April 1963, the organization distributed a leaflet in which the youngsters condemned turning the *ziyara* into an occasion for political declarations by Israeli officials.[126]

In January 1964, when the chiefs were anticipating the *ziyara* of *al-nabi Shu'ayb* in April where they would celebrate the "independence" and "equality" of the Druze community and the Druze Youth Organization was about to be dissolved because of the official pressure directed against it, two Druze villages, Kisra and Kufr Smai', were hit by an epidemic of measles which resulted in the death of twenty-four children. The Israeli press reported that the lack of accessible roads had prevented medical assistance from reaching the children in time. The press also discovered that nine Druze villages had no water and electricity with which even the smallest

[125] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection, "Statutes of the Organization of the Druze Youth." One of the first objects of the organization was "to strengthen the friendly relations of the Druze community with the other Arab communities." The statutes also stressed the nonsectarian policy of the organizations.

[126] Ibid., circular of the Organization of Druze Youth, 18 April 1963. The chiefs of the community used the religious argument against Druze organizations on several occasions. In 1932-1933 the Tarifs did so to oppose "the Druze Society" established by 'Abdalla Khayr in 1932, as well as in the 1960s and 1970s in order to abort the attempts of intellectuals to organize themselves into an alternative elite that could replace the traditional chiefs.

Jewish settlement had been supplied as of the first years of the state.[127]

In the beginning of 1965, a small group of Druze intellectuals, prompted by the news that the lands surrounding the shrine of Sabalan near Hurfeish had been declared state land when no official document could be produced showing them to belong to the *waqf* of the shrine, tried to set up a new youth organization. Members distributed leaflets during the *ziyara* to the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb attacking "the policy of land confiscations," condemning the chiefs for letting themselves be "used as instruments in the hands of the authorities," and speaking out against exploiting the *ziyara* as a platform for Israeli Prime Ministers to make political statements.[128] Less than a month later Samih al-Qasim was fired from his job by the Ministry of Education for "pedagogical reasons." Qasim's sacking during the campaign for the sixth general elections and the land expropriations that went on unabatedly were seized upon by the youngsters to try to stir the community into action against the chiefs and the authorities and to galvanize all Druze youth into banding together to make a unified stance.[129]

But the elections of the year 1965 proved to the young activist Druzes in clear terms that it was beyond their power to put a dent in the relationship between the authorities as represented by the officials of MAPAI, and the chiefs, whose leadership had recently been reconfirmed by the establishment of the Druze courts and by the reelection of Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi (through the Arab lists) as sole representative of the Druze community in the Knesset. The representatives of the clans who had not been rewarded by posts in the Druze courts or following the elections joined the young activists in their criticism, though their goals were different. The elections of 1965 also accentuated the division that had set in among the youth and the way they organized themselves in 1955-56 and again in 1961-64. As of 1965, those who were against the compulsory military service refused to cooperate any longer with those

[127] *Ma'ariv*, 9 February 1964, *Ha'aretz*, series of articles written by Eli Eli'ad under the title, "The Druzes in Israel", 13 and 14 November 1966.

[128] *al-Itihad*, 27 April 1965.

[129] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection, correspondence between 'Asim al-Khatib (of Rama), Munīr Faris (of Hurfayish), Muhammad Sirhan (of Mghar), Salim Khanjar (of Julis), 5, 6, 11, 22 and 27 June 1965; "Declaration of the Druze Youth," 11 June 1965, and "Appeal to the Druzes" signed by twenty-six young people, among them Samih al-Qasim, October 1965.

who limited their struggle to obtaining equality for the Druzes, stressing that military service was the key argument for equal rights. Led by Samih al-Qasim, the first group had worked during the recent election campaign to mobilize the Druze vote for the Communist candidates.[130] The second group stressed "the integration of the Druzes" in the economic and political life of Israel. The main spokesman of this group at the time was Kamal Mansur, who in 1957 had been sent by the Foreign Ministry to the United States to lecture on "the Arabs in Israel." Later, in the 1970s, Mansur served as Adviser for Arab Affairs to the President of the State. For Mansur's group, the first step toward "integration" was to have the Druzes taken out of the Arab departments administered by the Prime Minister's Adviser for Minorities Affairs and to bring MAPAI to agree that Druzes were granted "full membership" by integrating them into its main body and not in its Arab departments.[131]

[130] Ibid.; the appeal stresses the common problems of the Arab communities such as the "confiscation of lands," "occupational discrimination," "the lack of water and electricity in the villages," and the "imposition of chiefs of the clans as leaders."

[131] See the chapter on Kamal Mansur and his political views, in Arnold Sherman, *The Druzes* (Tel Aviv and New York, 1975), pp. 61-73.

CHAPTER FIVE

# "INTEGRATION": PROMISES AND PROTESTS

## *"Equal One Day, Less Equal the Next"*

In the general elections of 1965 the Communist Party, RAKAH, succeeded in doubling its support among the Druzes, primarily in the villages with a mixed Muslim, Christian and Druze population. Actual numbers were still small but the result clearly implied an incipient protest against the grip the ruling party, MAPAI, exerted on the community.[1] Voting for MAPAI continued to be through the Arab lists mobilized by the clan chiefs, though some among the latter, as we already saw, had begun to defect by the early 1960s. Frustrated at having been upstaged by Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun in the elections of 1959, Sheikh Salih Khnayfis, for example, mobilized voters for the National Religious Party in 1961 and for the Herut (GAHAL, later Likud) party in 1965, as did Quftan Halabi of Daliat al-Karmel, who felt bypassed when Amal Nasr al-Din was appointed secretary of the Histadrut office on the Carmel. Still, more than 50 percent of the Druze votes in 1965 went to the MAPAI-sponsored Arab lists, with Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi being able to hold onto his seat. Kamal Mansur, who in 1965 had attempted to replace Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi as the representative of the Druzes in MAPAI, intensified his attacks against indirect voting for the ruling party, insisting that the Druzes be fully integrated in the party and the state.

When in 1966 the authorities stepped up their efforts to settle the problem of the "disputed lands," there was a wave of protest

[1] CBS, Results of the 4th Knesset elections, 3 November 1959 (Special Series, No. III) (Jerusalem 1961); Results of the 5th Knesset elections, 15 August 1961 (Special Series, Nos. 216 and 217 (Jerusalem 1964); Results of the 6th Knesset elections, 1 November 1965, 2 vols. (Jerusalem 1967). It is difficult to calculate the distribution of the election results in the mixed villages, but the total of Druze votes for the Communists in the villages Rama, Buqay'a, Abū Snan, Kufr Yasif, 'Isfiya and Shafa'amr probably did not exceed 150 in 1961 and 300 in 1965; the total votes for the communists in the exclusively Druze villages was 87 in 1961 (1.5 percent of those who had the voting rights in these villages) and 168 (2.5 percent) in 1965.

among the young people in the Druze villages of the Galilee. This protest coincided, not accidentally, with an official declaration that the Military Government would be abolished by the end of the year. On 26 August 1966, a first meeting was held, in Kufr Yasif, of *Mu'tamar al-Muthaqafin al-Duruz*, the Congress of Druze Intellectuals. The initiative had come from a group of thirteen young people from different villages who among themselves had also decided on the contents of the congress and now began sending out invitations to academics, teachers and others from among the educated level. When officials in the Department of the Adviser for Minorities Affairs and the traditional Druze leadership got wind of their activities, they hastened to get in on the act by intervening through Amnon Lynn, son-in-law of Abba Hushi and the Director of the Arab Department of the Histadrut. Lynn first "met with the political and the religious traditional leaders asking them to prevent the congress from taking place," and then through the mediation of Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi, talked to the main initiator of the congress, Salman Faraj, asking him to postpone the meeting at least "until the ruling party could set up an [official] organization of Druze intellectuals." As Faraj would not give in, Lynn persuaded Sheikh Amin Tarif to lock the gates of the al-Khadr shrine in Kufr Yasif where the congress was to take place. Faraj later claimed that pressure had been put on him by the traditional leadership who asked him not to hold a political meeting in what was a religious site, and it was then decided to hold the congress in a private house not far from the shrine.[2]

Lynn's attitude may be gauged from a series of articles that appeared in November in a leading Israeli newspaper, *Ha'aretz*, in which he gave his own reasons for the Druze youths' protest: "The State of Israel has not learned how to exploit the progress and the changes that have been introduced among [the Druzes] following the application of obligatory conscription. By failing to exploit the process [of progress], we are creating dangerous consequences among the Druze youths." In order to counteract the process of "Arabization," as he called it, that "had already emerged among the youth, the State of Israel should develop an Israeli-Druze consciousness. It must be clear to decision makers that without a well-defined policy for the future, all the training the

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[2] S. Faraj, pp. 82-83.

Druzes receive in the army and every gun [they carry] ... can become a threat to the State." Lynn added that "a group of young people are now trying to formulate in writing the elements of this Israeli-Druze consciousness... As part of the search for this consciousness a congress of Druze intellectuals was held in Kufr Yasif, on 26 August, which elected a committee of thirty-nine members and published a manifesto."[3]

Nabih al-Qasim, cousin of Samih al-Qasim and himself the author of two books confirming the Arabism of the Druzes, gives a different version of the events claiming that the initiative for the congress had actually come from Lynn: "Amnon Lynn had some of his men [among the Druzes] invite the Druze youths for a meeting in Kufr Yasif... That meeting was indeed held ... but the outcome was a slap in the face of those who had called for it"—"clause ten" of the declaration that came out of the meeting highlighted the solidarity of the Druzes with all other Arab communities in Israel.[4] Lynn claimed that the original draft had had only eight clauses and that it had been amended by "elements who are not committed to searching for the [Druze] consciousness."[5]

In the end only a small number of such "elements" participated in this "sectarian congress," and none of them made it onto the council the congress established whose forty-six members represented two main groups: Druze employees of the Arab Department of the Histadrut and correspondents of *al-Yaum*, the ruling party's Arabic newspaper, and teachers, the latter forming the majority of the participants and of the elected members of the council.[6] On 25 September and again on 27 October some of the participants in the congress calling themselves "the Secretariat of the Committee of Druze Intellectual Youths" met in Acre to establish an organ that could "translate the guidelines of the declaration of the congress into political action."[7] This secretariat then

[3] Eli Eli'ad, "The Druzes in Israel," part 3, *Ha'aretz*, 14 November 1966.
[4] Nabih al-Qasim, p. 49.
[5] Eli'ad, *Ha'aretz*, 14 November 1966.
[6] S. Faraj, pp. 86-87. "List of the Elected Members for the Council of the Druze Congress."
[7] DA, Suhayl Farraj collection, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Sessions 25 September 1966 and 27 October 1966. It seems that the names and the numbers of the members of this secretariat were not fixed; main activists were Salman Faraj, the Druze representative in the Teachers Trade Union, Amal Nasr al-Din, the secretary of the Histadrut in the Carmel and later in 1973 Knesset member in the

convened in Acre most of the members of "the congress's council" and established *al-Rabita al-Durziyya*, the Druze League, which on 15 January 1967 was officially registered and became a legal organization. The leaders of the League publicly rejected all interference of the Israeli officials in their political activities, but if we look at the goals as formulated in Article 3 of the Druze League's statutes, it is not difficult to detect the hand of Israeli officials. While the first goal concerns the struggle "for full equality among the citizens of the state," the second speaks of "the particularist Druze character and its friendly relation with the Jewish people" and "providing the Druze youth with an Israeli-national education"[8]—none of it very different from Amnon Lynn's "Israeli-Druze consciousness."

Meanwhile, teachers in the League together with some students had begun a campaign against the "Arab Departments" in the Office of the Adviser, MAPAI and the Histadrut. Already on 1 January 1967 it addressed a first appeal to the President of the State, the Prime Minister and the "Jewish people" which was distributed among the Druzes and published in the Hebrew press. It was to be the League's program for the following ten years:

> (1) Since we have done our duties [in the military services]...and see in the lack of our equality...an infringement and a denial of our rights, we urgently demand the correction of this wrong; (2) we demand the direct entry of the Druze community in the Ministries; (3) we reject categorically the idea of Druze departments for treating [the Druzes]; (4) [we demand] the introduction of the subject of the ancient and newly established ties between the Jewish people and the Druze community in the curricula of the Hebrew and Druze schools; (5) [we demand] the industrialization of the Druze village; (6) [we demand] entry into the Jewish Department of the Histadrut; (7) we demand that the problems of the Druze veterans be solved by the same Department of the Ministry of Defence that deals with the problems of the Jewish veterans; (8) [we demand] recognition of the right of the Druzes to be full members in all the parties.[9]

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Likud party, Zaydan 'Atshi, then a student active for the MAPAI, later Israeli Consul to the United States and in 1977 a KM for the Shinui, and Farhan Tarif the representative of the Arab Department in the Histadrut and the father of Salih Tarif who became the Druze representative for MAPAI (Labor) in the Knesset in 1984.

[8] Ibid., "The Statutes of the Druze League" (n.d.); see also the text in S. Faraj, pp. 91-96.

[9] Ibid., "Appeal of the League's Council," 1 January 1967.

During the months leading up to the June 1967 war, active members of the League repeatedly expressed their loyalty to and sympathy with the Jewish people, through letters and meetings with the Prime Minister and the Commanding Officer of the IDF's Druze unit in which, in keeping with the stated goals of the League, they reiterated their demands for more "integration."[10] In July 1967, when it was clear that militarily the war had been overwhelmingly in Israel's favor, members of the League broadened their activities among Druze teachers to win their support for the "goals" of their new organization. Most teachers, however, were wary of getting involved in politics. Israeli officials by now were aware of the "danger" of the large number of Christian or Muslim teachers in the Druze schools[11] who for them were behind the lack of "Druze consciousness" because "they propagate Arab nationalism in their classes," while "the curriculum is not suitable to the Druzes, [since it] contains chapters that glorify Arab heroes."[12]

Four teachers from Daliat al-Carmel decided to respond positively to Salman Faraj's appeal for support and on 5 and 22 July sent him two letters, urging him to insist on having the non-Druze headmasters in the Druze villages replaced by Druzes, and on having "certain instructional material concerning the Druze tradition and customs" introduced into the curriculum.[13] Early in 1968, the four invited their Druze colleagues in Daliat al-Carmel to do something about "the problems of the non-Druze teachers," organizing a meeting in the Histadrut's club that was under the control of Amnon Lynn. When it turned out that what they wanted was to send a letter to the officials of the Ministry of Education insisting on "the transfer of the non-Druze teachers from the Druzes schools to others," the majority of those present declined. Not accidentally,

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[10] Ibid., Letters of Shmuel Dotan, the commanding officer of Unit 300, to Salman Faraj, the head of the League, 9 February 1967; Shmuel Toledano to Salman Faraj, 31 May 1967.

[11] Publications of the Ministry of Education, *Hitpatḥut ha-Hinukh ba-'Ida ha-Druzit be-Israel*, Jerusalem, June 1969. In 1967/68 the number of the Druze teachers in elementary schools in sixteen Druze villages (apart from Shafa'amr, Kufr Yasif an Rama) was 120 and constituted less than 45 percent of the total teachers in these villages; if we add Shafa'amr, Kufr Yasif and Rana, the total number of the teachers was 131 (115 men and 16 women).

[12] Eli'ad, *Ha'aretz*, 13 November 1966.

[13] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Letters of Yusuf Halabi, Sudqi Hassun Sāmih al-Qasi, Hayl Hassun, Majid Ḥusayni, and Mu'in Halabi to Salman Faraj, 5 July 1967; 22 July 1967 (the second letter signed only by four of them).

in the course of the year all teachers of Daliat al-Carmel were invited to render a visit to the home of Giora Zayd, the Shin Beit officer responsible since 1948 for the Druzes. Although the meeting with Zayd was allegedly "no more than a social visit," for the teachers it spelled out clearly the nature of the relationship the Shin Bet expected the teaching profession to take up. It meant that teachers soon learned where certain "red lines" were drawn and began to express themselves more guardedly.

After 1967 the demarcation between the two groups of educated Druzes became ever sharper not only on the "ideological level" but also in their political actions. The group which supported unity with the other Arab communities "in the struggle for equality" boycotted all activities of the Druze League whose goals they saw as the validation of the authorities' efforts to separate the Druzes from the other Arabs. Small wonder that the officials defined them as "the negative forces" and the supporters of the League as "the positive forces."[14] In order to galvanize Druze public opinion both groups rapidly radicalized their political discourses. The first accentuated the "racist and discriminating policy" of a government that sought to separate the country's Druzes from its other Arabs but continued to treat them as it treated those other Arab minorities. The second criticized the government for continuing to treat the Druzes as "Arabs" and called this an "unjust and unfair policy."[15]

By the Arab Departments of the Office of the Adviser, the ruling party and the Histadrut both groups were seen as challenging the community's old traditional leadership. In November 1966, when the Israeli press first began to take notice of the protest of the young Druzes, Nissim Tokatli, representative of the Office of the Adviser in the northern district, "analyzed" this sentiment succinctly as follows: "The elders know how to appreciate the progress introduced into the Druze villages by the State of Israel. They still remember what living conditions were like before that, while the youngsters have many complaints."[16] This argument was echoed by Druze elders themselves when, after June 1967, they would compare their standard of living with that of their breth-

[14] The terms were also used by the supporters of the Druze League itself.

[15] Two authors who may be seen as representing these two opposed political discourses are Nabih al-Qasim, pp. 53-61 (the terms "racist" and "discriminations" on in p. 61) and Salman Faraj, pp. 65-66, 78-86.

[16] Tokatli was interviewed by Eli'ad, *Ha'aretz*, 24 November 1966.

ren on the Golan Heights, and with the Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza, areas now occupied by Israel. Kamal Mansur, increasingly eager for a role to be played by his generation, was quoted as saying:

> The Druze veteran does not compare his lot with [that of his] neighboring Arab, that would be too simple. His frame [of reference] is provided by the Jews with whom he served and fought. They have a strong educational advantage and are better situated to advance more quickly. This irks the Druze. How can you be equal one day and less equal the next?[17]

On 10 October 1967, Prime Minister Levi Eshkol "summoned the leadership of the Druze community" to tell them that "from now on, the Druzes will not need the special apparatus that deals with the minorities but the regular apparatus will be open to them." Eshkol used the Hebrew phrase "*kamonu kamokhem*," i.e., "you are what we are," expressing equality between two partners,[18] but his declaration was received with mixed feelings by the educated Druzes. While the Druze League and the supporters of MAPAI among the Druze youths welcomed it, those who sought unity with the other Arab communities saw it as another step on the road of setting the Druzes apart. Over time Eshkol's words would prove to have been no more than a promise— one among many that remain unfulfilled until today.

On 3 November, members of the League's secretariat came out with the following statement:

> The Israeli Druze League expresses its joyfulness which is the joyfulness of all loyal and free members of the Druze community following this positive historical step.... Although, as is well known, the Druze League was the first to insist on the rights of the Druzes to be integrated in the ministries, the Office of the Prime Minister did not officially inform us that it has approved our demands...but ignored us by informing others [the religious council and the Druze member of Knesset]... The introduction of the article "by stages" without spelling out its significance ... raises the fears of many Druzes... The Druze League demands... the execution of the decision within a year's time.[19]

Through the Communist press, the opposed group launched fierce

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[17] Quoted by Sherman, p. 72.

[18] *Davar*, 11 October 1967; *Ma'ariv*, 11 October 1967.

[19] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," "Declaration," 13 November 1967.

attacks against the government's promise "which is intended to instill in the Druzes the illusion that from now on they no longer are part of the minorities....Some people in the official circles are trying to give the impression that the new government decision actually means... full equality."[20]

The promised "integration" by stages was to be prepared by the Prime Minister's Adviser. Realizing almost a year later that preparations were inexplicably being delayed, the League and the supporters of MAPAI among the Druze youth launched "a campaign for the immediate integration within the Party and the Ministries." Letters were sent to the Ministries of Agriculture, Employment and Education in which the League called upon them to open their offices immediately. The League was especially keen on the integration of the Druze soldiers in the general units of the IDF. Writing to Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan, Salman Faraj called for Druze integration into the IDF by giving the Druze a choice of the unit in which he wanted to serve and allowing qualified Druzes to study in the Air Force school and the military colleges. Faraj also asked Dayan to exert his influence on the Minister of Education to encourage "integration," summarizing a letter he had sent to the Minister of Education on the issue of a new curriculum for the Druze schools: "As a Druze teacher I think it imperative for the Minister of Education to reconsider the curriculum currently used in the Druze villages which gives pupils an Arab-Israeli [and not a Druze-Israeli] education."[21]

In 1968, the campaign for "integration" carried on by groups and individuals, often without coordination between them. Salman Faraj, Munir Faris and Salih Khayr,[22] main activists of the League, spoke out on behalf of a recognized organization. Zaydan 'Atshi, Muḥammad Ramal and 'Atif Kayuf, who had established a MAPAI Druze cell working for "integration," spoke on behalf of

[20] *al-Itihad*, 13 October 1967; see also al-Qasim, p. 61.

[21] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Salman Faraj to Moshe Dayan, Minister of Defence (the date is not clear, but October 1968; and the same to the Minister of Education, 12 September 1968).

[22] Salman Faraj later became headmaster of a school in his village, Yanuh; Munir Faris became at the beginning of the 1970s director of the Office of the Vice-Minister of Communications; Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi in the 1980s the mayor of his village Hurfayish. Salih Khayr who was a student, then a teacher, was elected in the 1980s mayor of his village, Buqay'a, as candidate of the National Religious Party. In 1996 he shifted to the Labor Party (MAPAI) in order to try to make it into the Knesset.

"the young Druze members" of the ruling party. Most active among the latter was Fadil Mansur, then a student at the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot. Meanwhile, Kamal Mansur used his personal contacts with leading figures in MAPAI.[23] In May 1968, in an attempt to mobilize all teachers and students, the Druze League called for united action of all groups and individuals working for "integration," urging them to register as members of MAPAI so as to compel the institutions of the party to accept the Druzes as full members[24]: "Since the integration in the Ministries necessitates first acceptance of Druze membership in the Israeli Labor Party, we think it appropriate to ask the party to accept the membership of the Druzes."[25]

Meanwhile another kind of "integration" was taking place. After the war of 1967, the Israeli economy began recovering from the recession of the previous year. The new demands of the labor market, at a time when the Druzes were rapidly losing their lands and forced to abandon agriculture, accelerated the process of proletarization that had set in in 1950. In the early 1960s already "thousands" of Druze workers and guards could be found in every spot where work was to be had, as far afield as the Negev.[26] In 1968, a large part of this army of workers and guards, joined by many newcomers, found employment in the Israeli occupied territories, notably in the Sinai.

Another, new development was the "integration" into the labor market of the Israeli economy of Druze women. The demands for cheap labor in the textile industry led the Gibor company to set up a factory in Daliat al-Carmel that gave employment to more than one hundred young women who did not seem to mind that their wages were below the minimum recognized by the Histadrut.[27]

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[23] As mentioned above, 'Atshi became Israel's first Druze consul and KM. Muhammad Ramal became secretary of the Histadrut in the Western Galilee and, since his resignation in 1972, has been a businessman and active in the internal politics of the community. 'Atif Kayuf became in the early 1970s headmaster of a secondary school. Fadil Mansur was the first Druze Ph.D. to become a professor; although an academic researcher, Mansur has been involved in many of the Druze community's issues since the 1960s.

[24] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Letters of Munir Faris, secretary of the League to Salman Faraj, head of the League, 9 May 1968; 11 June 1968.

[25] Ibid., an appeal signed by Munir Faris, 10 July 1968.

[26] Eli'ad, *Ha'aretz*, 13 November 1966.

[27] *Hapo'el Hatza'ir*, 21 May 1968; *al-Huda*, July 1972, p. 12. By 1972 Gibor in Daliat al-Carmel employed more than two hundred female workers.

By the early 1970s the textile industries had penetrated into many Druze villages where the surplus of women wanting work brought these industries large profits.

Meanwhile, the IDF, the National Border Guards, and the Prison Services absorbed many Druze veterans who were unable to find suitable work in the north of Israel and who either continued their "permanent service" in IDF or enlisted in one of the security forces. As of 1967, Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi served as intermediary for veterans who wanted work in the security forces. That the majority of these soldiers and policemen were then sent to serve in the occupied territories did much to deepen the existing mutual mistrust between the Palestinians and the Druzes.[28]

How very partial "integration" within Israeli society remained is illustrated by an article that appeared in *Ma'ariv* on 20 September 1968. It describes a Jewish contractor from the south of the country who would come regularly all the way to the north to collect Druze men who could not find work in their own mountainous villages and who would be willing to work as guards on sites in the Negev: "This time Abu Ya'acov didn't come to take guards but to share in the mourning," offering his condolences to families whose relatives had been killed while on guard duty far from home.[29]

Israel's blitzkrieg of June 1967 had not only dealt a devastating blow to neighboring Arab states, it had also led to the occupation by Israel of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This meant another stream of Palestinian refugees. It did not take long for the military defeat and the growing despair that came in its wake to inspire acts of protest and it is no coincidence that the Palestine Liberation Organization, established in 1964, began reorganizing itself, its activities taking on an overt guerilla character. First attacks came across the border with Lebanon. Part of Israel's response was to

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[28] This mistrust was reported by the Israeli press after events occurred in the Israeli occupied territories. In October 1967 two Palestinian workers in Ramalla were killed by Israeli frontier guards of a unit in which also Druzes served, and the *Jerusalem Post* was quick to report that the killers had been Druzes. But when the names of the killers, given out the following day, appeared to be those of Jews, the newspaper made an attempt at an apology; *Jerusalem Post*, 12 and 13 October 1967. In March 1968, the death of two Druzes killed by Palestinians was reported by the Israeli press which made much of "mutual hostilities" between the Druzes and the Palestinians; see *Ha'aretz*, 11 October 1968.

[29] *Ma'ariv*, 20 September 1968.

create a new Druze unit, Unit 244, which was to be posted in this new "confrontation zone" in the north. According to the official version Druze officers in the Minorities Unit 300 had complained about the fact that the Druze Unit in the army had been given no share in the wars of 1956 and 1967: "This led to the feeling that they were not fully trusted as to their loyalty." It was also felt that promotions were often decided by other than military considerations. Unit 244 was supposed to signal a new beginning.[30] The nature of the decision to set it up, however, was not very different— it only drove in deeper the wedge the authorities had inserted among the Arab communities when they established the first Druze unit in 1948.

On 27 August 1968, the Druze League held its second congress in Acre. Not more than forty people took part, because the majority of teachers and students were either indifferent or had their suspicions of the organizers of the Congress. The congress repeated its demands for "integration," but now also sought "to broaden the Druze communal representation in the religious council,...and the creation of general Druze assembly whose members will be the Druze Member of Knesset, the heads of the local councils... the representatives of the official organizations and public personalities," indicating that the members of the congress were out to share with and not replace the chiefs in the leadership of the community. However, apart from Fadil Mansur who was to become Vice-President of the League, the congress failed to mobilize either the Druze cell of the ruling party in the University of Haifa or Kamal Mansur who had begun his own campaign to have him included in the main list of the Labor Party as the Druze candidate.[32]

Druze activists for "integration" had their supporters among the—mainly younger—Jewish members of the Labor Party. Policymakers in the party, however, decided not to take up the Druze demands for fear that this would lead to a defection of party members belonging to the other Arab communities. On 1 May 1968, Amnon

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[30] Headquarters of the GADNA', *Mimaga'im Ishiyyim le-Shitfut Goral* (From Personal Contacts to Common Fate), (n.d.), p. 37.

[31] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya,*" Decision of the second congress, 27 August 1968.

[32] Ibid.; on 2 October the administrative body of the League was broadened to 13.

Lynn, as Director of the Labor Party's Arab Department, presented a 93-page long report to a commission set up to deal with Arab affairs, in which he voiced his reservations about granting Arabs full membership in the Labor/MAPAI party:

> Giving the Arabs the opportunity to join our party and the feeling [!] that they are members and partners...no doubt is of important significance... But it is clear that the issue is not as simple as all that. In our eagerness to correct the situation we may find ourselves doing harm to the issue itself and to the Arabs.[33]

As to full membership, Lynn completely ignored any difference between "Druzes" and "Arabs." In a section on "the Status of the Druzes in Israel," however, he stressed "the independence of the Druze community" throughout its history. That is, for Lynn, the Druzes were Arabs when it came to membership in the ruling party but not Arabs with regard to their "consciousness," newly to be established as "Israeli-Druze." Lynn backed this up by the argument that separating the Druzes from the Arabs on the issue of full party membership would mean a great electoral loss among Christians and Muslims. Thus, he suggested that the party in the future stipulate "that every non-Jewish Israeli citizen who accepts the obligation to defend the state be allowed to present an application for acceptance into our party."[34] Druze demands for full party membership he saw as a symptom of the radicalization that was affecting the Druze youths:

> Following the conscription of the young Druzes in the IDF and as a direct result of the great social progress which the state created in the Druze village, the state of affairs in the community has recently changed. Many young people who in the past had no influence in the community, are now taking up significant positions....In the past when the patriarchal structure compelled them to submit to the authority of the sheikhs, these young people took little interest in what it meant to be Druze....But, as a result of the great progress which we [the Jews] have caused....young Druzes have become interested in the past, present and future of the community....Since there is no written teaching material for educating the young Druzes, and given the extremist propaganda of the Arab countries and the radical circles in the country, some Druzes—notably among the

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[33] Amnon Lynn, *Rashe Prakim l-Dione ha-Va'adah le-'Inianim 'Aravi'im* (Guidelines for the Discussions in the Commission of the Arab Affairs), 15 October 1968, p. 87.

[34] Ibid., p. 93.

> intelligentsia—have begun to question the Druze particularist entity and the existence of an independent Druze religion. These youths went even further and published articles in the press trying to prove that the Druzes are in fact Arabs.... Heavy accusations have been leveled against the elders of the community for having asked the IDF to apply the law of conscription to the Druze community. They even claim that the state discriminates against them even though they serve in the IDF. The other items of discrimination which the inciters mentioned are: (a) being in a separate Druze Unit in the IDF; (b) discrimination in the educational field; (c) the refusal to incorporate them in the Labor Party as equal members; (d) the lack of [economic] development in the Druze villages.[35]

That for Lynn the call for full membership in the Labor Party was made by "inciters," in other words, that he fails to acknowledge the democratic nature of their demand, again points up the common interest between the decision makers in Israel's ruling party and the Druze chiefs. It also signals that the intellectuals—even those most devoted to the ruling party—were as yet too weak to sideline the chiefs and replace them as a new intermediary elite.

The Druze candidacy in the ruling party for the seventh Knesset for a while polarized the Druze members of the party into those who supported Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi as candidate for the Arab lists and those who insisted on full membership and the inclusion of a young Druze candidate in a safe slot on the Labor Party's general list. Even though, since May 1969, the Druze representatives of both camps intensified their efforts to mobilize their Jewish patrons in the party which was discussing the issue,[36] it seems that the arguments Lynn had raised in his long report carried the day since it was decided to maintain the status quo on the subject of membership in the party and to support the candidacy of Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi on one of the two Arab lists.

While Kamal Mansur's name appeared as number 92 on the general list—not a realistic slot by a long way—Labor leaders promised to grant full membership to all their "Arab comrades" after the elections.[37] However disappointed the activists of the Druze League and the young Druze cell of Labor Party may have been at the decision to postpone the "integration" of the Druzes in the

[35] Ibid., p. 90.

[36] *La-Merhav*, 13 May 1969, *Yedi'ot Ahronot*, 19 May 1969; see also N. al-Qasim, p. 66.

[37] *al-Anba'*, 15 October 1969.

party, they were not sad to see Kamal Mansur excluded from the election race.

### *Frustration and Radicalization*

When votes were counted in the 1969 elections, more than 1,100, i.e., more than 10 percent of the total Druze vote, turned out to have gone to the Communist party, RAKAH. None of the Israeli officials nor the Israeli press had been prepared for such an outcome.[38] Even if it did not in any way signal that the clan vote system was on the way out, the result certainly encouraged the two groups of "intellectuals" to step up their political struggle. Kamal Mansur, the activists of the League, which in 1970 changed its name to *al-Munazama al-Durziyya fi Isra'il* ("The Druze Organization in Israel") and the members of the Druze cell of the ruling party at the University of Haifa claimed that it had been the delay of the promised "integration" that had enabled the rise of the Communists.[39] The group of Arab nationalists such as Samih al-Qasim, Naif Salim, Muhammad Nafa', Nabih al-Qasim and others celebrated the results as the beginning of a "regaining of consciousness" among the Druzes and called upon their supporters to intensify the "struggle" against the government policy of separating the Druzes from the other Arabs.[40]

While this latter group had access to the Communist press and journals, the pro-Labor group, now even more fervently clamoring for integration, published its viewpoint through the Hebrew press and *al-Anba'*, which had replaced *al-Yaum* as the Arabic government organ. On 7 January 1970, Fayz 'Azzam, one of the students

[38] *Ha'aretz*, 24 October 1969. Again, it is difficult to give the exact numbers of the distribution of Druze votes since six of the villages have a mixed population. However, there was an obvious rise in votes for the Communists in villages that were considered strongholds of the Labor Party. Thus, in Yarka, the village of Mu'addi, 197 people voted Communist, in 'Isfiya, the village of Abu Rukun and Mansur, 150, in Bait Jan 194 and in Mghar 224.

[39] See the articles by Yoel Dar in *Omer*, 26 February 1970, and *Davar*, 15 May 1970. Dar criticized the League for being behind the "radicalization" of the Druzes.

[40] See the analysis of the election results in N. al-Qasim, pp. 79-80. Since 1965 the RAKAH gained as new members many Druze intellectuals, among them Samih al-Qasim and Naif Salim, two Druzes who belonged to a Palestinian group of poets called "Poets of Resistance," and Mohammed Nafa', a short-story writer who, at the end of the 1980s, became one of RAKAH's Knesset members.

at Haifa University since the late 1960s and a high-school teacher in 'Isfiya, complained in one of the main Israeli newspapers, *Ma'ariv*, that Labor's policy had allowed "the negative forces" in the community to gain strength.[41] In much the same vein, Zaydan 'Atshi addressed an open letter to Prime Minister Golda Meir criticizing the policy of the Arab Departments whose officials he held responsible for the failure of the ruling party to "integrate the Druze intellectuals...within high level jobs of the Ministries."[42]

The waves of protests by young Druzes induced the Israeli officials to hand out "rewards" to some Druze intellectuals, supposedly signaling "integration" in the political and administerial institutions of the state. Already in October 1969, on the same day that the election results were made public, Faris Falah became the first Druze judge to take up office in a first instance court in Israel.[43] Kamal Mansur, deeply frustrated after having failed to make it into the Knesset, was again dispatched by the Foreign Minister to the United States on a lecture tour about the minorities in Israel.[44] But these rewards were not enough to stop others from alerting the ruling party that further radicalization was on the way. The two main activists in the student cell in Haifa, Muhammad Ramal and Zaydan 'Atshi, seized every opportunity to express their disappointment at the position of Labor toward the "integration" that Eshkol had declared in October 1967 and warned that delay would only strengthen the Communists among the Druzes.[45] Amnon Lynn, who had led Labor's election campaign among the Arabs, was much encouraged by these "positive forces" who shared his own fears of radicalization among the Druzes. Lynn warned the party leaders that "failing to accept the Druzes in the Labor party [as full members] is to have dangerous consequences among the young who serve in the various security forces,"

[41] *Ma'ariv*, 7 January 1970; see also N. al-Qasim, pp. 81-82. Fayz 'Azzam established, in 1972, the Druze journal *al-Huda*. 'Azzam had been a supervisor in the Ministry of Education since 1977 and is a writer of material on the Druze tradition in the Druze curriculum.

[42] *al-Anba'*, 13 February 1970.

[43] *Jerusalem Post*, 20 October 1969; *Ha'aretz*, 24 October 1969.

[44] *al-Anba'*, 1 February 1970.

[45] See Yehuda Oliva, "Political Involvement of the Druze in Israel" in Dana, p. 132. For a decription of this disappointment among the students and young, see his "Hadruzim bi-Isra'el Ba'ayat Zehut 'Atzmit ve-Hishtaykhut Politit," *Medina u-Mimshal* (State and Government), vol. 2, no. 1 (1972), pp. 106-107.

and he recommended immediate "integration of loyal [!] Druzes" into Israeli life.[46]

Early in September, Prime Minister Golda Meir repeated the promise of her predecessor, saying that: "from now on the dependency of the Druze citizens of the State on the special minorities' Departments that exist in government offices will be removed.... Administratively [the Druzes] will be Israelis in every aspect." These repeated promises now became part of the arguments the young Druzes employed in their campaign for "integration." Any delay in the fulfillment of these promises was interpreted as a conspiracy between the traditional Druze leadership and the officials of the Arab Departments who were working against implementing integration in order to safeguard their own interests and to halt the emergence of a new elite among the Druzes.[47]

Although in their ambitions these intellectuals all rallied around the banner of "full integration," they had differing views on the question of "identity" and of the priorities in the "struggle" for equality. For Fadil Mansur and Muhammad Ramal, the Druzes were Arabs who as citizens had proven their loyalty to the state and therefore deserved to be given equal rights. They also continued to protest against the ongoing expropriations of Druze lands. Salman Faraj, Salih Khayr, Kamal Mansur, Zaydan 'Atshi and Fayz 'Azzam, on the other hand, seldom raised the issues of land expropriation and identity prior to 1971,[48] most of them using a political discourse geared to their Jewish interlocutors and the image these had formed for themselves about the Druzes. In this sense, 'Atshi and 'Azzam reinforced the community's self-image as fos-

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[46] *Yedi'ot Ahronot*, 12 June 1970; see also N. al-Qasim, p. 94.

[47] Cf. Fadil Mansur, in an interview with *La-Mirhav*, 1 September 1970.

[48] Such differences became more accentuated during the 1970s and 1980s. Zaydan 'Atshi, who in his position approached Fadil Mansur and Muhammad Rammal, began to acknowledge the Arabism of the Druzes in 1972 when he was appointed Israeli consul in the U.S.; see his book, *Druzes and Jews in Israel, A Shared Destiny* (Sussex 1995), pp. 164-168. According to Salman Faraj, Druze identity is a trivial issue for the majority of the Druzes who want to integrate in the state; see Faraj, pp. 182-184. Kamal Mansur was quoted as saying, "People may confuse us with Muslims or Christians, but there is an overriding difference that no one can overlook—we have totally empathized with the State of Israel and we've proven our loyalty on the battlefields," in Sherman, p. 71. Fayz 'Azzam and Salih Khayr stress the Druze identity in the Druze journal they established in 1974, *al-Huda*. Under the title "Druze Identity—A Problem Demanding Solution," Fayz 'Azzam welcomed the decisions of the Israeli authorities "to foster Druze communal and cultural distinctiveness;" see in Dana, pp. 113-117.

tered by the Jewish majority, especially the latter's expectations of the Druze as a loyal minority. Thus, they hastened to react whenever there was a "hostile" press article or commentary, notably after the results of the 1969 elections which threatened to dent the image of their loyalty among Jewish public opinion. On 1 November 1969 *Yed'iot Ahronot* published an article titled "Et Tu Brute?"[49] While it evoked angry reactions all around, the article prompted this group of young intellectuals to start a promotion campaign together with Israeli officials in order to "improve" their image in the eyes of the Jewish population.[50] At the same time they sought the intervention of the official institutions to put a stop to the "Arab nationalist propaganda" of the Communist party in the Druze villages. As secretary of the Druze Organization, Salih Khayr asked the Director of the Ministry of Information to arrange a series of lectures among the Druze youth: "Today there is the sense of a grave fiasco in our society... a great vacuum has been created which extremist elements, especially RAKAH, can easily exploit.... We suggest... the appointment of young Druzes to undertake this [task]."[51]

Much inspired by the election results, the group of Druze intellectuals supporting Arab-Palestinian unity began focusing their attention and activities on three closely related issues. First, they wanted to see the process that separated the Druzes from the other Arabs brought to a halt, if not reversed; second, they set out to change the image of the Druzes in the eyes of the Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza, and, third, they acted to have the compulsory military service abolished. In order to mobilize the ordinary people, they put great stress on the problems all Arab minorities in Israel had in common, notably the discrimination in the labor market and the confiscation of Arab lands. They seized every opportunity to criticize the old and traditional leadership and the intellectuals who sided with the officials for using "integration" as a means to further separate the Druzes. Muhammad Nafa' expressed his group's position in these words:

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[49] See *Yedi'ot Ahronot*, 2 November 1969.

[50] A most active spokesman was Kamal Mansur, who was given a post in the Ministry of Information.

[51] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Salih Khayr to Y. Elan, Director of the Ministry of Information, 24 December 1970.

> The Druze youth knows exactly that these notables [the chiefs] on whom the authorities rely are no more than shaky wooden pillars and props which have been infested by woodworm and need to be replaced, but the Druzes reject that new props, looking younger but carrying the same registered trade-mark, be installed... The economic situation in the Druze villages evokes our pity and disgust. Where are the electricity projects for example in Bait Jan, Kisra, Yanuh, Jath, Kufr Smai'? Where are the employment offices in the Druze villages?![52]

In August 1971, less than a year after her promise of integration, Golda Meir appointed the Prime Minister's Adviser on Minorities Affairs, Shmuel Toledano, as Adviser on Druze Affairs. Possibly to pre-empt the unfavorable response among the Druzes that was to be anticipated, the Director of the Prime Minister's Office wrote to the Druze Organization: "This decision is not contradictory to the decision [of September 1970] to take the treatment of the Druzes away from the Arab Department,"[53] but the activists for "integration" clearly recognized it was doing harm to "the dignity of the Druze community."[54] The pro-Arab-Palestinian group saw the decision as a well-deserved slap in the face of the "new props," and they took advantage of the frustration it caused among the activists for integration to further politicize the Druze community:

> In this year [1971], the political arena was entered by a new group of young people who had been groomed by the authorities to replace the older sheikhs. They chose the way of making a lot of noise... to have the sheikhs removed more rapidly, and then replace them. Although the harm [of such behavior] could be great, the conscious forces in the community [the Arab Palestinian group] ... successfully infiltrated these loud screaming groups in order to encourage them to scream even louder and reveal the injustice [done] so as to prod every young Druze into action.[55]

Although Nabih al-Qasim here exaggerates his group's ability to manipulate the "integration" activists, he correctly describes the process of political mobilization that was then taking place among Israel's Arabs, including the Druzes. The military defeat in the 1967 war of Egypt, Syria and Jordan had also meant a blow to the

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[52] *al-Itihad*, 14 August 1970; see also N. al-Qasim, p. 95.
[53] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Office of the Prime Minister to the League/Organization, 22 August 1971.
[54] Ibid., Administrative Council of the League to the Druze heads of the Local Councils, 16 September 1971.
[55] N. al-Qasim, pp. 102-103.

pan-Arabism, *qawmiyya*, that Egypt's President, Jamal Abd al-Naser, stood for. Among the Palestinians in Israel, the re-emergence of *wataniyya* that followed brought them to direct the focus of their struggle more than ever on obtaining their full civic rights in the state. An Arab "intelligentsia" emerged who had gone through the Israeli school system and often were university graduates. Their main vehicle became the Communist party. Meanwhile, the gradual integration of the Arab labor force into the country's wider economy, facilitated by the abolishment of military rule, enabled the authorities to continue their subordination of the Arabs to the Jewish market. In the early 1970s the government then also stepped up the "judaization" of the Galilee through further expropriation of Arab owned lands.

Those Druze intellectuals who shared with the mainstream of Arab intellectuals their struggle for equal rights singled out the ongoing land expropriations and the blatant discrimination in the labor market in order to galvanize the Druzes against the military service which for them formed the one cleavage that set them apart from the other Arab communities.

Military service was the main issue also that irrevocably divided this group from those Druzes who supported "integration"—the politicization of the latter took its cue from exactly this situation of "exclusivity" that military service in the Israeli Defense Forces had created for the community. Realizing they could not stay behind, though less extremist in the vocabulary they adopted and the slogans they raised, the "integrationists" also began clamoring against land expropriation and the continuing job discrimination; the issue of military service they replaced by "the backward situation" the Druze villages still found themselves in 1971.[56]

While each group had its own agenda, the combined effect of their protest activities was that in the elections of 1973 more than 2,100 Druze votes went to RAKAH, i.e., about 18 percent of the total eligible votes. If we add the votes that went to the Zionist left-wing parties, then we come to more than 3,000 votes, or about 26 percent.[57] As in 1969, this result took the Israeli authorities

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[56] DA, File "*al-Rabita al-Durziyya*," Decision of the third congress, 17 January 1971. This was the first time the League/Organization referred to the expropriation of the land, the decline of agriculture and the gap in prices between "Druze" and "Jewish" tobacco.

[57] Again, it is difficult to give exact figures.

and press completely by surprise—again the accusation of "Et Tu Brute?" was heard. Few Israeli academics took a scholarly interest in the Druzes at the time. One of them was Yehuda Oliva, a political scientist, who assumed:

> A number of factors have brought about changes in the attitudes of sections of the Druze population...toward their nationality and the political network in the Middle East. The main factors are: (a) a lack of ideology combined with the opportunism characterizing the history of the community; (b) the Druze custom of concealment (the *Taqiyya*); (c) the Israeli-Arab conflict; (d) the fact that other sections of the community are engaged in the conflict with the state of Israel; (e) the weakening of the patriarchal structure of the Druze society.[58]

Oliva does not explain why he thinks his "primordial" factors of "opportunism" and "*taqiyya*" have anything to do with the upsurge in political protest among the Druzes, while the weakening of the patriarchal structure seems to be something that takes care of itself. Druze radicalization is seen by Oliva as external not only vis-à-vis the community but also the State of Israel: "As long as the present political reality in the Middle East continues (namely two basic factors, the increase of Arab-nationalist feeling and the Israeli-Arab conflict), we shall continue to witness confusion and protest votes in the Druze community." Oliva concludes: "Cooperation between the State and certain elements within the Druze-Israeli group could help create Druze-Israeli consciousness."[59]

At about the same time, a researcher at the University of Haifa, Gabriel Ben-Dor, began a "political study" on the Druze in Israel in which he wanted to trace "the emergence of the new forces" and their protest in Druze society. As Ben-Dor sees it, five stata

> have emerged since the process of integration into Israeli society gained momentum...The first is composed of middle-aged men without much formal education... They are very much within the bounds of primordial attachments to the family and community... but within the family they hope to capture the leadership from their elders on account of their relevant political skills... [A]lthough essentially func-

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[58] Oliva, "Political Involvement," pp. 125-126; idem, "Hadruzim be-Israel," p. 98. Oliva is here repeating an argument he had expressed the year before when he sought to explain the "protest" vote and "radicalization" of the Druzes as reflected in the 1969 elections.

[59] Oliva, "Political Involvement," p. 133. With a "Druze-Israeli" group he means the Druze activists for "integration" whom he knew at the university.

> tioning along the lines of the first, [the second is younger] i.e., ... they participate in an increasingly complex network of relationships with a growing number of participants [outside the family]... [The third are the discharged veterans who are] interested in pragmatic reform manifest in material gains, educational facilities and jobs, and its members refrain most of the time from challenging the present leadership directly... The fourth... is entirely new in Druze history... Its members possess skills and resources that are basically urban... [The fifth] is a special case of the urban stratum of the intellectuals... [and the] sixth... encompasses 50% of the population, namely that half of the community who are women... a political force... [that] is merely potential.[60]

In a separate article on the intellectuals based on the same research, Ben-Dor concludes that the Druze intellectual stratum had been

> caught in a vicious cycle. As long as the strength of the traditional leaders and patterns continues, they can successfully resist and subvert penetrating institutions; on the other hand, they cannot be broken without building alternative (institutional) centers of power for reformers. Yet the latter have been unable to do so without allying themselves with, and thus strengthening, the traditional leaders...as well as ...weakening themselves... Some of them [in this way] have been able to negotiate [with the traditional leadership] a good bargain for themselves.[61]

The way Ben-Dor explained Druze radicalism and protest at the time and completely marginalized the pro-Arab-Palestinian group may have stemmed from the mode of selection he applied vis-à-vis his sources, but also followed from the then current view of modernization he adhered to as a process that brought progress, innovation and integration to a community that was still largely traditional. State control and policy since 1948 and land expropriation, for example, were issues conveniently omitted by Ben-Dor as was the obvious ability of the pro-Arab-Palestinian group to galvanize frustrated Druzes into protest. His classification of Druze societal strata nevertheless is useful if one wants to explain

[60] Ben-Dor, *The Druze in Israel*, pp. 178-183.

[61] Ben-Dor, "Intellectuals in Israeli Druze Society," p. 151. In another article, also based on his research, Ben-Dor refers to the impact military service has had on the Druze society and political leadership, concluding that discharged officers could not replace the traditional leaders. Ben-Dor "The Military in the Politics of Integration and Innovation: The Case of the Druze Minority in Israel," *AAS*, vol. 9, no. 3 (1973), pp. 356-369.

the political mobilization that occurred during the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s. The discharged veterans did not exist as a separate stratum, but Ben-Dor may have added them—as "pragmatic" moreover—to show the alleged impact of the IDF on the new generation he wanted to study. The vote for the Communists came from frustrated people in Ben-Dor's second and fifth strata, and obviously men as well as women, who were able to revolt against "the patriarchal structure" to which Oliva refers. But Ben-Dor's "stratum of intellectuals" are those intellectuals with whom he was acquainted at the time, i.e., the Labor Party's cell members at the University of Haifa and the activists of the Druze Organization—people who not only lacked a sophisticated ideology, but whom frustrated Druzes voting for the Communists often viewed as "collaborators in a new dress." Samih al-Qasim and his colleagues, whom Ben-Dor considers marginal, were seen by many frustrated young Druzes as a new kind of intellectuals, admired for their integrity and their refusal to bargain with the chiefs.[62]

The elections of 1973 should also be seen as the result of the quickening pace of the community's politicization. Early in 1972, Sheikh Farhud Qasim Farhud, who had opposed the compulsory military service since 1956 and now faced the drafting of his own son into the army, distributed throughout the Druze villages a personal appeal for the "abolition of the obligatory military service" while also opposing the government's policy "of land confiscation... the violation of the Druze sanctuaries through the official abolition of *'Id al-Fitr*, and the transformation of the annual religious *ziyara*... to the shrine of *al-nabi Shu'ayb* into *a'yad* (festivals) of political propaganda against our Arab nation."[63] In an atmosphere of already heightened politicization and protest, the Arab-Palestinian group, in a meeting on 10 March 1972 in Sheikh Farhud's house, decided to establish *Lujnat al-Mubadara al-Durziyya*, the Druze Initiative Committee, setting out its motifs in a first declaration as follows: "The appeal of Sheikh Farhud...has urged us...to take collective action against... the injustice that touches all of us and to struggle on behalf of the demands of [Farhud's] appeal." In highly militant language, the declaration

[62] Ibid., p. 147, and idem, *The Druze in Israel*, p. 119.

[63] DA, File "*Lujnat al-Mubadara al-Durziyya*," Declaration of Sheikh Farhud (n.d.), probably at the end of 1971 or the beginning of 1972; see also N. al-Qasim, pp. 108-109.

goes on to describe the discrepancy between "the blood tax" the Druzes are paying through "their compulsory conscription" and "the plundering" [of lands under] "the pretext of defending the security of the state," and points to the gap between Jewish settlements that were well provided for and the Druze villages which in many cases still lacked development projects, electricity, access roads, etc. It further inquires what the reasons may be for the differentiation of per-capita budget allocations between the Druze and Jewish local councils and for the "discrimination" in the job market which compelled the Druze labor force to seek employment in security jobs as far away from the Druze villages as the Negev, Eilat and Sinai.[64]

From the moment it came onto the scene the Druze Initiative Committee seized each and every opportunity to reiterate their demands. Since most of its early-hour members belonged to RAKAH or were communist supporters, the Committee also used the Communist press for political mobilization, and they exploited every event in the Druze villages to perpetuate the state of "boiling," as al-Qasim called it.[65] Events such as the arrest of Druze activists in RAKAH and the Initiative Committee and confiscation of lands in all Druze villages were watched closely and widely publicized.[66] Throughout 1973, when the expropriations of lands were the order of the day, Committee members in each village organized "struggles to liberate the stolen lands." When the authorities destroyed a house in the village of Bait Jan that had been built without official permit, the Druze Initiative Committee launched a severe "protest against and condemnation" of a policy that "does not differentiate between Druze, Sunni or Christian" when it comes to withholding civic rights, but continues to "divide and rule" on other fronts.[67]

The Druze Initiative Committee borrowed not only the political discourse of the Communists at the time, but also their tactics, methods and ways of organizations. Local branches were set up in several villages where most of its members supported RA-

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[64] DA, File "*Lujnat al-Mubadara al-Durziyya,*" First declaration, "*Bayan ila Abna' Ta'ifatina al-Durziyya wa-Ila al-Raj' al-'Am fi Isra'il,*" March 1972.

[65] N. al-Qasim, pp. 111-112.

[66] DA, File "*Lujnat al-Mubadara al-Durziyya,*" Declaration "*La Yaziduna al-'Unf Illa 'Unfuwana,*" October 1972.

[67] Ibid., "*Ihtijaj wa-Istinkar,*" July 1973.

KAH. When, also in 1972, two Druze journals were established—*Majalat al-Duruz* by Kamal al-Qasim, a lawyer from Rama, and *al-Huda* by Fayz 'Azzam—the Committee at first accused their founders of collaborating with the authorities, as such sectarian organs fitted in nicely with the official policy of "separating the Druzes from the Arabs," but soon members were found to use these journals as vehicles for "consciousness raising among the Druzes."[68]

While the close ties between the Druze Initiative Committee and RAKAH gave the "integrationists" a chance to accuse its members of being "Druze clients to a Communist patron" and "unauthentic," the Committee's activities were welcomed by the frustrated Druzes of Ben-Dor's second and fifth strata who sought to counteract the control of the traditional leadership. Much like the Druze League/Organization for integration, the Druze Initiative Committee may thus be seen as both a result and a cause of politicization in a time of growing frustration, increasing literacy and rising expectations. The establishment of *Majalat al-Duruz* and *al-Huda* contributed to this process since even though their founders saw themselves as politically independent, they shared with both groups of intellectuals the struggle for full civic rights. *Al-Huda* survived until the end of 1983, and thanks to the liberal editorial policy of its founder was open to Druzes of the entire political spectrum, even though it represented first of all the group that favored "integration" and 'Azzam himself was convinced he ought to search for a "specific Druze identity."[69] Furthermore, that *al-Huda*'s appearance coincided with the establishment of the Druze Initiative Committee meant that the activists for "integration" began to a certain extent radicalizing their political discourse in response to the militant language of the Committee. Their criticism of the government's delay in fulfilling its commitments became more strident, as exemplified by the sometimes sarcastic tone Fayz 'Azzam could strike in his articles. For example, in April 1972, he wrote:

> On every occasion when they make a decision concerning the Druzes, the government and the Adviser are using the same tune: "The government has decided so and so in accordance with the request

[68] See on this debate, N. al-Qasim, pp. 114-117.

[69] See Fayz 'Azzam, "Druze Identity—A Problem Demanding Solution," pp. 113-120.

> of the Druze leaders..." The government decided to apply compulsory conscription on the Druze in accordance with the request of the notables of the community. It accepted integration in response to the demands of the Druze sheikhs. It now has retracted from implementing [integration] for the sake of *minshan khatir*, the Druze leaders. Could this mean that our leaders are capricious? Or is the government stupid and servile to this extent?[70]

### *Questions of Identity*

The activities of the Druze Initiative Committee, the protests against the failure of the government to implement its decision on equal rights, the ongoing expropriation of lands, and the increase in the number of educated people together with the rise in the standard of living, and the growing number of women working outside the home, were all factors that influenced the attitude of the young people toward the traditional elite, its values and its political behavior. In a period of renewed contact with the Palestinians in the Israeli occupied territories, and the reaffirmation by the Arabs in Israel of their Palestinian roots, but with large numbers of Druzes serving in the army, border guard units and the prison services, questions of identity and self-image began to loom ever larger for the Druzes, perhaps not among ordinary people who were pre-occupied by getting better jobs and a higher income but significantly so among the politicized intellectuals.

Summarizing the debate on "Who are the Druzes?", one observes three tendencies. The first comprised the supporters of left-wing parties, including Zionist ones, and adopted the nationalist ideology of the Druze intellectuals in Syria and Lebanon who had never stopped seeing the Druze community as one of the Islamic sects and the Druzes as Arabs by race, language and culture. The second emerged during the late 1960s and was represented mainly by young educated people coming from families that had been

[70] *al-Huda*, No. 3 (April 1972), p. 4. On the new discourse of the group of "integration," see *al-Huda*, no. 2 (February 1972), p. 16, where Zaydan 'Atshi writes on military service and equal rights, "*al-Tjnid al-Ilzami wal-Ta'ifa al-Durziyya*," and *al-Huda*, no. 9, (April 1973), pp. 19-20, where Fadil Mansur refers to the confiscations of lands with figures, "*Mu'anat al-Ta'ifa al-Durziyya fi Isra'il.*"

connected with the Israelis already before 1948, who rejected any ties between Druzes and Arabs/Muslims.[71] The third tendency was represented by some of the activists for "integration" and students who saw no contradiction between "being Arabs and being loyal to the [Israeli] state," as Zaydan 'Atshi put it.[72]

Echoing the Israeli media who at the time were exercised by the question "Who is a Jew?" Rafiq Halabi asked: "Who is a Druze?" wondering whether one was to follow the "model" put up by Amnon Yanai, Musbah Halabi, Haim Blanc or De Sacy. Or were they simply Arabs?[73] Halabi clearly saw that the Druzes were "undergoing a crisis of identity... Our problem is ourselves. We simply do not understand what we are."[74]

The identity debate came at a time when the pro-Arab-Palestinian group were able to threaten not only the "separate identity" that the authorities wanted, but also to propel Druze youths toward supporting the unity of all Arab minorities. Since this was something the Shin Bet had always worked against,[75] it is not surprising to find growing complaints of young Druzes against "the harassment" by the Shin Bet[76] and pro-Israeli Druzes establishing *al-Halaqa al-Suhuniyya al-Durziyya*, the Zionist-Druze Circle, to become *al-Haraka al-Durziyya al-Suhuniyya*, the Druze-Zionist Movement at the end of 1973. As its founder, Yusuf Salah Nasr al-Din, writes: "After the Yom Kippur war of 1973, negative voices were heard among the Druzes, demanding the abolition of compulsory conscription, and calling for integration in extremist

[71] The debate between the two opposite tendencies is neatly reflected in the articles by Nabih al-Qasim, as representative of the first, and Jabr Abu Rukun, as representative of the second tendency. This debate began when Jabr Abu Rukun wrote an article, "Are the Druzes Muslims?" in which he set out to "refute" the "claims" of the Initiative Committee's Islamism and Arabism; see *al-Huda*, no. 10 (July 1973). Under the title "Independent Religion, Independent Nation," al-Qasim gives his version of the "historical events" of the Islamism and Arabism of the Druzes, analyzing the Israeli policy of dividing the Arabs into "religions and nations," *al-Huda*, no. 11 (August 1973); see also on this debate, *al-Huda*, no. 13 (October 1973).

[72] *al-Huda*, no. 12 (September 1973).

[73] *al-Huda*, no. 11 (August 1973). Amnon Yanai had published a booklet in 1972 on the subject; Musbah Halabi had written *Brit Damim* (Covenant of Blood), which constructs a Druze self-image in the way the author thinks his Jewish reader wishes to see the Druzes.

[74] Interviewed by Sherman, pp. 74-79.

[75] AHA, Top Secret Report of the Shin Beit, 1962.

[76] *al-Huda*, no. 5 (July 1972).

Arab nationalism... As positive Israeli citizens, we initiated the establishment of a Druze solidarity movement."[77]

In the simplistic wording of Yusuf Nasr al-Din, in Israel there are two options, either to reject or to accept the right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. In this sense, every citizen, including non-Jews, who accepts this right is a virtual Zionist. Nasr al-Din's credo—or as he likes to call it, his "*ani ma'amin,*" Hebrew for "I believe"—is the recognition "of the historical, moral, religious and national right of the Jewish nation to Eretz Israel." Nasr al-Din formulated the goals of the Zionist-Druze Circle as follows:

> (1) to halt the intrigues and their detrimental influence among the Druzes; (2) to establish a wide information framework among the Jews so as to explain the fruitful collaboration between the Druzes and the Jews before and after the establishment of the state; (3) to create a frank relationship between the Druzes and the authorities without intermediary; (4) to make the moral dimension and the ideological motivation an integral part of the formal and the informal education... of the Druzes.[78]

Throughout the 1970s Yusuf Nasr al-Din concentrated his activities on "deradicalizing" young Druzes by fighting against "the negative forces" and encouraging "the positive forces" within the Druze community. He was able to mobilize intellectuals as well as traditional chiefs. Among the intellectuals were to be found Majid Hussysi, a teacher of Daliat al-Carmel who soon became headmaster, and Jabr Abu Rukun, of 'Isfiya, also a teacher, who became Director of the Cultural and Educational Department in his village. Among the traditional chiefs was Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun who on 17 May 1979 was elected president of the Zionist-Druze Circle.[79] He was even successful in attracting Sulayman Abu Salih, of Majdal Shams on the Golan Heights which Israel had occupied in 1967, at a time when the Druze opposition there against Israel was intensifying. Yusuf Nasr al-Din, not surprisingly, established good personal relations with the main figures in the Zionist Congress and the Jewish Agency and became the "Druze-Zionist" representative in the Congress.[80]

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[77] Yusuf Nasr al-Din, "Ta'sis al-Haraka al-Durziyya al-Suhuyniyuya," *al-Hadaf,* no. 1 (May 1979), p. 5.

[78] *al-Hadaf,* no. 3 (July 1983), p. 4.

[79] Ibid., no. 2 (July or August, 1979), p. 2.

[80] See on the Druze representation, ibid., p. 3.

While pictures of Sultan al-Atrash, Shakib Arslan and Kamal Junblat illustrated the journals of the Druze Initiative Committee,[81] photos of Labib Abu-Rukun featured prominently in publications of the Druze-Zionist Circle.[82] The two organizations used diametrically opposed political discourses, symbols and actions. The Druze-Zionist Circle was not only an attempt to halt the "radicalization" it saw embodied in the Druze Initiative Committee but also to maintain "the positive image" of the Druze community in the eyes of the Jews and to encourage a self-image among the young that corresponded to this "positive image."

In the late 1980s the Druze-Zionist Circle embarked on writing the history of "A Friendship that Stood the Test." Published in 1989 in Hebrew with that title, *Ahva she-'Amda ba-Mivhan*, not only had the idea for the book been suggested to them by the Zionist Congress, but of its two authors one was Yehuda Yizra'eli, vice-president of the Zionist Congress at the time, the other Jabr Abu Rukun. *Ahva she-'Amda ba-Mivhan* portrays in glowing terms the "positive image" of the Druzes by tracing the ties between them and the Jews all the way back to the days of Jethro (Shu'ayb) and Moses, and goes on to highlight and idealize the role the Abu Rukuns had played in reinforcing those ties in our own days when they established their first contacts with the Zionist Movement in the 1930s. Carried away by the myth they were creating the authors had no difficulty either in using for their purpose even someone so unlikely as Sultan al-Atrash.[85]

The 1973 elections results, however, left no doubt that the Druze community, as Joshua Teitelbaum described it, saw a "radicalization that has closely paralleled that of the general Israeli Arab population (albeit among the Druzes it has been a slower process)."[84] In April 1974, two separate but closely related events occurred that showed the authorities that Druze "loyalty" was not

[81] See, for example, *Nahnu al-Duruz*, February 1980. In order to circumvent the Israeli publication law, the Druze Initiative Committee changed the names of its journals; e.g., *Mawaqif*, August 1990.

[82] See *al-Hadaf*, no. 2 (July or August 1979), p. 11; and the cover of idem, no. 3 (July 1983).

[83] Yehuda Yizra'eli and Jabr Abu-Rukun, *Ahava she 'Amda ba-Mivhan* (Publication of the Histadrut, Tel Aviv 1989), pp. 9-34. The Druze Zionist Circle distributed many copies gratis among Druze chiefs and "literati."

[84] Joshua Teitelbaum, "Ideology and Conflict in a Middle Eastern Minority: The Case of the Druze Initiative Committee in Israel," *Orient*, vol. 26, no. 3 (1985), p. 347.

a foregone conclusion. The first took place in Kiryat Shmona, a small town near the Lebanese border, where a group of Palestinian guerrillas crossed the border and killed a number of Jewish civilians. In an outburst of unrestrained rage, residents attacked Druzes from the Golan and Israeli Druze soldiers who happened to be on the spot. Activists of the Druze Initiative Committee hastily put out a leaflet condemning the attack against the Jewish civilians but also the counter-attack against the Druzes. Taking its cue from parallel protests by Palestinian activists in Israel and pointing to the deeper lying motives behind the events the leaflet balanced its condemnation by saying: "We are deeply affected by the horrible assassination [of the Jewish civilians] in Kiryat Shmona but we also feel great pain and anger as a result of the expulsion of our Arab-Palestinian people from their homeland and Israel's aggressive occupation of Arab lands." As to the attacks on Druze "elders and soldiers," the leaflet declared that "the events of Kiryat Shmona have ripped off the artificial mask of so-called Druze-Jewish brotherhood."[85]

The leaflet was distributed on 24 and 25 April during the *ziyara* to the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb and in all Druze villages. Early on the day of the official ceremony, dozens of Druze Initiative Committee members and supporters gathered at the site of the shrine determined to put an end to "the political ceremony" the occasion of the *ziyara* had become. In an effort to stop them from paralyzing the program of the ceremony to which the then Minister of Defense, Yitzhak Rabin, had been invited, the religious elders, headed by Sheikh Amin Tarif, hastily negotiated an agreement with the representatives of the Committee, whereby the latter promised not to disturb the celebration if the religious council agreed to the following:

> (1) recognition by *al-ri'asa al-ruhiyya* (the religious council) and the concerned authorities that *'id al-fitr* is an official feast for the Druze community; (2) public recognition that the Druzes are Arabs and the attempt at separating them from their Arab nation was a dirty plot [*sic*]; (3) condemnation of all the attempts and deeds that had insulted the Druzes in Kiryat Shmona and elsewhere; (4) abolition of the compulsory conscription; (5) permission for one of the Druze Initiative Committee's members [Sheikh Farhud Farhud] to speak at the general meeting [of the celebration] or have the leaflet of

[85] DA, File, "Druze Initiative Committee," leaflet of 23 April 1974.

the Druze Initiative Committee read out concerning the events at Kiryat Shmona.[86]

According to Nabih all-Qasim, Sheikh Amin agreed to recognize *'id al-fitr* and promised to restore it the following year, and the Druze Council acknowledged that the Druzes were Arabs, but they refused to let Sheikh Farhud speak during the official ceremony. On this point the negotiations broke down and a violent demonstration followed. When Defence Minister Rabin arrived, he was greeted with slogans against the military service, his speech was disrupted and Sheikh Farhud was carried to the stage to read his declaration after all.[87]

### *More Committees—More Promises*

While the unprecedented events of April 1974 echoed throughout the Druze community and were intensely discussed and commented upon,[88] the authorities, for their part, decided the time had come to "handle the Druze problem." Two committees were set up to this end. One was a Knesset committee which was presided by Avraham Schechterman and had a membership of a further five Members of Knesset, all Jews. The second was appointed by the Office of the Prime Minister's Adviser for Minorities Affairs, and was "an academic forum presided over by Dr. (today Professor) Gabriel Ben-Dor, of the University of Haifa, and had as members Fayz 'Azzam and Salman Farraj, both university graduates, teachers, supporters of "integration," and together editors of *al-Huda*.[89] That the reports of both committees refer to approximately the same issues and are on the whole identical as to their

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[86] N. al-Qasim, pp. 145-146; 'Iz al-Din al-Manasira, "Al-Duruz al-Falastiniyyun," *Shu'un Falastiniyya*, no. 108 (November 1980), p. 45, and cf. Teitelbaum who uses al-Manasira, p. 356.

[87] For further details see N. al-Qasim, pp. 146-148; cf. Teitelbaum, p. 356.

[88] A reserved sympathy was expressed by Salman Farraj, one of the supporters of "integration" who justified the protest and rejected the violence. On the other hand, Salman Faraj, president of the Druze League/Organization, condemned the use of "the national hold" the Communists had over *al-ziyara*; see *al-Huda*, nos. 18 and 19 (May and June 1974), pp. 3-4, 9. Meanwhile, Samih al-Qasim wrote that the event "is a small outbreak in the heart of the volcano," *al-Itihad*, 30 April 1974; see also N. al-Qasim, pp. 149-152.

[89] SA 13012/1352/1/CL, Report on the "Problems of the Druze Community," 30 May 1975.

recommendations leads one to suspect they were working closely according to ideas previously expressed already by Amnon Lynn and the Druze activists for "integration," to which were added on some of the concepts Ben-Dor had formulated while doing his research on the Druze.[90]

Ben-Dor's report, presented to the Prime Minister's Department in November 1974, starts with a definition of the Druzes: "Although their language generally is Arabic, and they are Arabs by culture, history, tradition and form of life, they have a strong Druze [*sic*] communal solidarity."[91] Military service was the first issue the committee brought up. "The compulsory conscription in the IDF manifests...the desire of the Druzes to take upon themselves the full obligations carried out by every citizen of the state.... We think that it is indispensable to maintain the compulsory services of the Druzes in the IDF."[92] No doubt mindful of the upheaval caused by the Druze youths, notably the members and supporters of the Druze Initiative Committee, the report went on: "This [military] service will gain in significance and will be accepted more eagerly among the Druze community if greater emphasis is put on the linkage between equal duties and equal rights."[93]

The report of the Knesset committee, presented early in 1975, continued to see the introduction of the Military Service Law as stemming from an initiative by the Druze notables themselves who had asked "...David Ben Gurion ... for the application of the compulsory conscription on the members of the Druze community."[94] The report indicates that the committee's findings supported the conviction in the "common fate and the identification of the Druzes in the country with the State of Israel. This blood partnership is

[90] The members of the two committees met several times to exchange ideas. Although he was not a member of either committee, Amnon Lynn participated in all meetings of the Knesset committee; see the Report of the Knesset Committee, SA, 13012/1352/1/CL, report of the Committee, 20 May 1975. This report was published under the title "*li-Hizoka shel ha-'Ida ha-Druzit bi-Israel*" (Toward the Strengthening of the Druze Ethnic Community in Israel) (publication of the Center of Information, Knesset of Israel, Jerusalem, June 1975), p. 2.

[91] SA 13012/1352/1/CL, Report of Ben-Dor's Committee under the title "Duḥ ha-Va'ada le-Hekr Ba'aiot ha-Druzim be-Israel" (Report of the Committee to Investigate the Problems of the Druzes in Israel), November 1974, p. 2. An incomplete Arabic version of the report was published in *al-Huda*, no. 27 (April 1975), no. 29 (June 1975), nos. 30 and 31 (December 1975).

[92] Ben-Dor Report, p. 2.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Knesset Report, p. 3.

a thorn in the eyes of our enemies who are conducting insolent propaganda in order to harm it. This matter needs urgently to be dealt with so as to overcome their destructive influence which could threaten the achievements of dozens of years."[95] Both committees recommended to open up the IDF units to the Druzes according to the competence and motivation of each individual soldier, and to put the Druze discharged veterans on equal footing with their Jewish counterparts where administrative treatment and job opportunities were concerned.[96]

Both reports also recommend that the government reexamine its policy toward Druze lands and apply "more flexibility"[97] in solving the "problem of settlement of lands, which the Druzes call confiscation."[98] The lack of lands for building purposes was seen as one of the most urgent problems of the Druze villages and it was recommended to speed up the approval of construction maps of the Druze villages. Ben-Dor's report offered a novelty in that it suggested to establish a new "Druze settlement" on state-owned land in the Upper Galilee near the villages of Bait Jan, Hurfaysh, Kisra and Kufr Smai', which all suffered from a shortage of building sites.[99]

Furthermore, guidelines were put forward for the development of the infrastructure of roads, public buildings, sewage systems, industry, agriculture and tourism.[100] The committees also reached the conclusion that the Druzes ought to come direclty under the Ministries instead of being dealt with by the Arab Departments. A transition period was duly recommended in the form of a "Department of Coordination and Guidance within the Prime Minister's Office," to be staffed by both Jews and Druzes.[101] On 14 June 1975 came the government's decision to incorporate the Druzes directly into the departments of the various Ministries,[102] and five months later, on 27 October, Amos Eran, Director of the Prime

[95] Ibid., p. 4.
[96] Ibid., p. 8, Ben-Dor Report, pp. 3-4.
[97] Knesset Report, p. 6.
[98] Ben-Dor Report, p. 10.
[99] Ibid., p. 11; Knesset Report, pp. 7-8.
[100] Ibid., pp. 13-14; Ben-Dor Report, pp. 12-17.
[101] Knesset Report, p. 5. The Ben-Dor Report suggests the creation of a committee of directors, or deputy directors, for a short transition period.
[102] SA 13012/1352/1/CL, Government session of 1 June 1975, Decision no. 792, 3 June 1975.

Minister's Office, was appointed head of the "Committee of the Director General for Druze Affairs" while Salman Falah, Druze inspector in the Arab Department of the Ministry of Education, was appointed as coordinator of the committee.[103]

During the next two years, attempts to translate some of these recommendations into practical policy hardly ever got beyond the drawing board. Six months after he was appointed Amos Eran reported he was still looking for a mechanism through which to carry out the recommendations, though he indicated that some progress had been made.[104] In order to achieve equality for discharged Druze veterans more quickly, Knesset Members initiated a special committee which published a report on 28 July 1976, indicating that: "Although the Druze sector has achieved great progress...it is necessary to accelerate many projects in order to close the gap that has been in existence for many years."[105] In all, there were two principal changes since the government's decision of 1975. One was an increase by the Ministry of Housing in the sum of the mortgage available to Druze veterans though there remained a gap with Jewish veterans. The second came from the Defence Ministry which "opened the IDF units and the military industries...to the [Druze] community's members. The Druze villages near the borders and the confrontation lines have been recognized as confrontation villages. There is also an intake of more Druzes in the Border Guard, Police, and the Prison Service, many of them officers."[106]

Again, apart from the absorption of Druzes in the security forces and into some units of the IDF, other measures were only followed up in the late 1970s, and even then only partially. The elections for the Ninth Knesset in 1977 brought the historical shift in power from Labor to Likud. They also gave Knesset seats to four Druzes, Sheikh Jabr Mu'addi, for the Labor Party, Zaydan 'Atshi and Shafiq al-As'ad for the new Shinui Party, and Amal Nasr al-Din for the Likud, reflecting the mixture of traditional chiefs represented by Sheikh Jabr, new clan leaders as represented by

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[103] Ibid., Decision no. 182, 27 October 1975.

[104] Report of Amos Eran, "Information on the Activities of the Committee of the General Directors for Druze Affairs" (publication of the Center of Information, Knesset of Israel, Jerusalem, June 1976).

[105] SA, 13012/1352/2/CL, Conclusion of the committee, 28 July 1976, p. 8.

[106] Ibid., p. 5.

Amal Nasr al-Din and Shafiq al-As'd, and the intellectuals who saw their "struggle for integration" reap its award by Zaydan 'Atshi's entry.

Where political mobilization and dealing with the overall problems of Druze economy and politics were concerned, however, none of these four differed from the traditional chiefs in the way they followed the usual clan politics, even if they used a seemingly different vocabulary. This "circulation" of the Druze elites is by now a firmly entrenched phenomenon, into the 1990s helping the authorities to secure their long-standing "achievements." The most obvious, and also the most damaging, result of the shift in power was that it froze the economic and political recommendations of both the Ben-Dor and the Knesset report except one, the creation of a separate Druze Department for Education in the Ministry of Education, in another calculated move to further divide between the Druzes and the other Arab-Palestinian communities.

Change did come to the Druze village, not because of any political decision-making, but because the economy of Israel proper, which had been picking up after the June War of 1967, was showing vigorous growth as of the early 1970s, some of which spilled over into the Arab economy. By the end of 1972 more and more Druze villages in the Upper Galilee were being connected to the national grid so that on 7 April 1976 Amos Eran could festively hook up the last Druze village, 'Ayn al-Asad, to the network.[107] The introduction of electricity to more Druze village at a time when the textile industry in Israel was on the look-out for cheap female workers in the Arab villages had its impact also on Druze women. By 1976 there were about six hundred women employed in the approximately twenty-five textile workshops and factories that had been established in Druze villages since 1968. Though they constitute less than 4 percent of the Druze labor force, this signaled a first step toward change in the life of Druze women.[108] A peak was reached in 1983 when the number of Druze women workers rose to about 2,500 or about 15 percent of the total Druze labor force.[109] However, by the late 1980s and early 1990s these

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[107] *al-Huda*, no. 6 (November 1972), p. 41; Report of Eran (n. 104).

[108] Number of women workers is based on Appendix 2 of the 18th Knesset Report, 28 July 1976; the percentage is a rough estimate.

[109] Z. Areal and Y. Shuval, *Istrategiat Pituh Kalkali shel Kfare ha-Druzim* (Development Strategy of the Druze Villages) (The Israeli Planning Company, IPAC, April 1983), pp. 13, 42-44.

factories and workshops disappeared again while new business ventures continued to come and go. In other words, the process of industrialization of the Druzes has remained highly unpredictable, the reason being the continuing lack of government interest and planning. Till today, none of the Druze villages in Israel has an industrial infrastructure, even though some of them have been granted the status of Development Area A, intended to facilitate the establishment of factories and businesses.[110]

Aware that the improvement in the socio-economic life of the community, such as it was, did not touch the core of the problem, intellectuals and representatives of Druze local councils continued to speak out against the policy of the government, their complaints directed at the gap between the government's promises and its actual policy. Apart from the aid given to the steel factory of the Qadmani Brothers in Yarka, what industrialization there was in the Druze villages remained limited to private initiatives which did not benefit from the facilities given to similar initiatives in the Jewish Development Areas A.[111]

Both factors, the instability of industrialization and the collapse of agriculture in the Druze villages, meant a drain on the male labor force of the Druzes to job opportunities outside their villages. That the occupational structure of the Druzes has its special features can be seen from the official figures of the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) according to which Jews working outside their place of residence form less than 45 percent of the Jewish work force while for non-Jews (including the Druzes) this is more than 50 percent.[112] The CBS does not provide sepa-

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[110] Since 1987 heads of the Druze Local Councils have been demanding this recognition. Their argument is that Jewish villages and settlements only two to five km from the Druze villages are benefiting from the privileges of such recognition, e.g., Yukna'am near Daliat al-Carmel and 'Isfiya, and Ma'alot near the Druze villages in the upper and western Galilee. However, even this formal recognition as development areas of category A does not bring any change in the situation due to the lack of infrastructure.

[111] The Qadamani's Brothers factory was established in 1968 by Salman Qadamani. By 1975, it employed more than 120 people, but faced difficulties between 1975 until 1980. With government aid in the 1980s the factory succeeded to overcome these and is today one of the more successful Israeli industries; see *al-Huda*, no. 5 (July 1972), p. 8; no. 29 (September 1975), p. 19.

[112] Arab employment outside place of residence developed as follows: 50.7 percent in 1960, 54.0 percent in 1970, 49.8 percent in 1980 and 49.5 percent in 1989. Central Bureau of Statistics, *Israeli Statistical Abstracts*, 1961, 1971, 1981, 1990. See also above, "Creating an Arab Proletariat," pp. 140ff.

rate figures for the Druzes in this regard, but a field study done by a Druze researcher, Yusuf Hasan, shows that in the late 1980s more than 60 percent of the Druze labor force were working outside their own villages.[113]

Ben-Dor's and the Knesset committee's reports admitted that agriculture in the Druze villages was "a thing of the past." The way the Knesset report saw it:

> ...agriculture in the Druze village is declining because it faces difficulties in competing with the agriculture products of the plain where irrigation, mechanical supplies and new agricultural methods are used.... However, taking into consideration the history and tradition of the community, the committee thinks that agriculture should be encouraged [and] has asked the Minister of Agriculture to make efforts to increase the water allocation.[114]

Since this report, allocation of water for agriculture to the Druze villages has but insignificantly increased—from 800,000 cubic meters in 1976 to one million in 1995.[115] If we look at all Arab communities which together constitute about 18 percent of the Israeli's population, we find that in 1993 they received ca. 24 million cubic meters, or only 1.36 percent of all the water allocated to agriculture throughout Israel. It was not until 1994, after many years of complaints, that water allocation to Arab agriculture rose to 64 million, i.e., 3.4 percent of the total. In other words, Jewish agriculture has been receiving 96.6 to 98.6 percent of the total water supplies for agriculture. From this total the declining Druze agriculture obtained 0.056 percent while the Druze community constitutes about 1.6 percent of the population.[116]

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[113] Yusuf Hasan, "Tmurot ba-Yishuvim ha-Druzim ki-Totza'a mi-Shiluvam ba-Ma'arakhet ha-Bithonit ha-Isra'elit," (Benefits the Druze Settlements [*sic*] Derive from Being Integrated in the Israeli Security System), MA thesis, University of Haifa, 1992, p. 60.

[114] Knesset Report, pp. 13-14.

[115] Based on figures provided by the Local Councils of the Druze villages (excluding Shafa'amr).

[116] See on the allocating of water the report of "Association of the Advancement of Equal Opportunity," Sikkuy, "Shivyon ve-Shiluv" for the years 1994-1995 (Jerusalem, October 1995), p. 33.

### *Further Conflicts*

As mentioned above, both the Ben-Dor and the Knesset reports recommend a certain degree of flexibility with regard to the problem of the "confiscated lands." The 1970s and 1980s, however, witnessed growing tension in the relations of the Druze villagers and the Israeli land institutions such as the Jewish National Fund and the Nature Reserves Authority. Both committees had been set up at a time when an attempt to settle the dispute between the Jewish National Fund and the Druzes from Yarka and Julis had deadlocked. The lands of both these villages had been expropriated by the various laws and regulations put in place for the purpose during the 1950s and 1960s. Already in the 1950s two villages lost part of their lands in the plain called "Ard Murran." Shakhevitch, who worked for the Jewish National Fund until 1958, gives his own side of the story in a book he published as late as 1992. As he tells it, when in the early 1950s the peasants of the two villages refused to surrender to pressure of the Fund's representatives, he used the same cunning skills that he had used during the 1940s to convince peasant farmers to give in. Accompanied by Ahron Kishoni of the Jewish settlement in the area, Kfar Masarik, Shakhevitch explains that the best way to accomplish the "task" was to bribe one of the chiefs who would then work to make the peasants come around. Shakhevitch's scheme worked in Yarka, but in Julis there proved to be some difficulties: "But here there was one man who has a finger in all the affairs of the village...I intimated to him that I would make it worth his while... and the peasants began to sign."[117]

By the 1970s, inhabitants of the villages were desperately trying to preserve what little land had remained theirs in the mountains. A committee had been set up by the Prime Minister to find a solution to the "disputed lands" question. Instead of settling the dispute, the inhabitants of Yarka complained, the committee's task seemed to be to convince the inhabitants to accept cash compensation for the lands that had been expropriated. "How is it that the government takes our children for compulsory service in the army and at the same time continues to steal our lands?"[118] By the

[117] Shakhevitch, p. 249.

[118] *al-Huda*, no. 14 (February, 1974), p. 17; a petition signed by 13 inhabitants of Yarka.

early 1990s most of those who were the rightful owners of these "disputed lands" had surrendered and accepted compensation in cash, though there are still others who persist in refusing to accept the government's proposal for compensation.

About four months after the Ben-Dor and the Knesset committee reports were published, a dispute broke out between the inhabitants of Kisra and the Israel Lands Administration when bulldozers "invaded" a site the villagers call *al-balhusiyya*, near the lands of Yanuh. The whole village, young and old, even children, proceeded to *al-balhusiyya* armed with knives, hoes and sticks to expel the "invaders"[119] and even succeeded in having the bulldozers's work postponed. In 1976, protests against land acquisition in the Galilee reached their peak during what is now called "Land Day," 30 March—violence on the part of the authorities resulted in the death of six Arabs. Kisra's villagers thereafter launched a campaign to try to preserve ownership of their lands. In July the villagers themselves brought in bulldozers to reclaim part of their mountainous lands. Meanwhile, on 27 July 1976, they addressed a petition to Amos Eran, officially appointed to implement the recommendation of Ben-Dor and the Knesset reports:

> Our permanent physical presence for centuries on the lands and the cultivation of them for many years are stronger than any piece of paper [the law] .... It is quite astonishing that the [Land] Administration claims all the lands of Kisra are rocky lands which have not been cultivated.... We wish to point out that lands which had been confiscated in our area on the pretext that they are rocky lands, soon became the site of an agricultural settlement for Jewish citizens.... Are we not citizens of the state and are not our children defending its borders like every Jew?[120]

The "struggle" Kisra put up to try to hold onto the disputed lands made a great impact on the Druzes. Delegations came from many villages to express their sympathy and support and the lands of Kisra soon were on the agenda of many Druzes. Except for Fadil Mansur and Muhammad Ramal, the activists for "integration" hesitated to support the struggle of Kisra openly. Fadil Mansur, however, became quickly involved and functioned as one of the

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[119] See N. al-Qasim, 192-194.

[120] Private Papers of Fadil Mansur, a petition of the inhabitants of Kisra addressed to Amos Eran and Meir Zurai', Director of the Lands Administration, 27 June 1976.

spokesmen for the inhabitants of the village. While the Druze Initiative Committee members were campaigning in support of the inhabitants of Kisra, the Druze League were arguing among themselves on what would be the best way to settle this "complicated legal issue" and warned the inhabitants of Kisra against cooperating with the "extremist elements" in the community.[121] The Druze Initiative Committee also began mobilizing political circles in the other Arab communities.[122]

On 18 August 1975, the Land Administration tried through the courts to prevent the villagers of Kisra from cultivating their lands. The villagers immediately appealed and demanded that the court's decision be reversed.[123] When they failed to get a response, Fadil Mansur succeeded in winning the support of Sheikh Amin Tarif for the struggle of Kisra and, on 3 September, a meeting was held in the shrine of al-Khadr, in the presence of the Druze Religious Council. The participants addressed a letter to Yitzhak Rabin signed by forty-one Druze notables and intellectuals, among them Sheikh Amin Tarif, in which they called upon him personally to intervene.[124] Rabin then instructed Amos Eran to find a solution for the problem of Kisra, and the latter soon began receiving petitions and letters from angry villagers. On 11 May, representatives of the village accompanied by Fadil Mansur met with Eran and three representatives of the government institutions in charge of land affairs which led to an agreement whereby these institutions recognized all the lands under cultivation as property of the village while the uncultivated areas were to be negotiated later.

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[121] Two references to Kisra can be found in *al-Huda*. The first is an article by Fadil Mansur in which he argues that of 11,200 dunam 5,005 are considered "rocky lands," 4,260 "absentees property" and 1,209 state lands because inhabitants did not claim them before 1976. In other words, the lands of Kisra were reduced to a mere 365 dunams. According to Mansur, the inhabitants have documents proving that they paid the taxes on all these lands from 1927 until 1932; *al-Huda*, no. 38 (November 1976), pp. 20-22. The second is a short article mentioning the dispute in Kisra, *al-Huda*, no. 45 (April 1977). The Druze League/Organization's papers in the Druze Archives do not comprise a single document referring to the dispute. Salman Faraj mentions land "confiscation" in general, as part of the historical record but deals with the "struggle" of his League for the "integration" in great detail; see S.Faraj, pp. 61-64.

[122] DA, File "Druze Initiative Committee," leaflet, mid-June 1976.

[123] Private Papers of Fadil Mansur, letter signed by twelve inhabitants to the judges of the Court in Haifa, 27 August 1976.

[124] Ibid., Letter signed by forty-one Druzes to Y. Rabin, 3 September 1976.

Furthermore the agreement was to be presented in writing to the land registers in order to give it legal standing.[125]

The agreement was made during the Labor government. When it lost the elections of 1977, the whole process had to begin all over again. Fadil Mansur, who enjoyed good relations with Eran and Rabin, found he now had to share the stage with Amal Nasr al-Din, the Likud's MK, in their efforts "to solve the dispute in Kisra." Through the mediation of Amal Nasr al-Din, it was agreed on 18 May 1978 to present the whole issue of the lands to "a committee of arbitration."[126] The inhabitants of Kisra made vain attempts to have the agreement of 1977 restored,[127] but before long the Land Administration succeeded in dividing the inhabitants of Kisra into two camps when some began accepting the compromise they were offered and others continued to reject it.[128] The compromise meant that Kisra lost about 5,000 dunam, while plots totaling about 5,000 dunam remained until the early 1990s the subject of dispute. Since 1975 lands in Kufr Smai', Yanuh and Mghar were also subjected to expropriation laws, though to a lesser extent than in Kisra.[129]

The "land problem," as many Druzes are calling it, reached a peak in 1987 when in the heart of the nature reserves of Miron a violent confrontation occurred between Druze veterans and Israeli security forces. Conflict had been brewing ever since the reserve had been officially declared in 1965, involving the Local Council of the village, the Nature Reserves Authority, the Israeli Land Administration, the Jewish National Fund's representatives and the Department of Planning in the northern districts. In November-December 1975, the Nature Reserves Authority itself estimated the total land of the reserve of Miron to be 110,000 dunams of which about 30,000 dunam belonged to the village of Bait Jan. In July 1987, this had dwindled to 12,000 dunam. In other words, the inhabitants of Bait Jan either sold or exchanged about two-

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[125] Ibid., Protocol of the meeting of 11 May 1977.

[126] Ibid., Letter signed by the representative of the village to Ariel Sharon, Minister of Agriculture, 22 December 1978.

[127] Ibid., Letter signed by the Secretary of the Histadrut in the central Galilee to Shimon Peres, 12 February 1979.

[128] Ibid., Letter signed by those who rejected the compromise to the Director of the Lands Administration, 22 June 1981.

[129] *al-Huda*, no. 29 (September 1975), p. 15 and nos. 32-33 (January and February 1976), p. 45.

thirds of the lands they held in the reserve over twelve years. The conflict erupted when the local council of Bait Jan tried to extend the build-up area of the village which had been limited to 2,000 dunam since the 1960s, which could only be done at the expense of the nature reserve whose Authority continued to reject any compromise until the late 1980s.[130]

When, in 1985, the size of the area planned for construction was adapted, the Local Council of the village refused to accept the change since the local population had not been consulted. On 13 March the Local Council distributed a document among Knesset members called "Please Save Bait Jan!" in which they pointed out that since the creation of the state the village had lost most of its lands. A general strike of the schools was followed by a general strike of all villagers on 13 April. Two months later, with the strike still going on, a group of youngsters put up in a ruin in the area, al-Zabud, a number of tents signaling that this was a new settlement. When, on 6 July, the police attempted to remove the "illegal settlement," dozens of policemen were injured and three police cars were destroyed while about two hundred inhabitants were accused of having been involved in these disturbances. Hundreds of young Druzes came to Bait Jan out of solidarity with the village. At this stage the conflict began to worry the Israeli government as well as the Druze religious leadership, and prompted them to find a solution. A compromise was reached after several meetings of the Minister of the Agriculture with the head of the Local Council and Druze leaders, among them Sheikh Amin Tarif, whereby the inhabitants would be compensated fair and square, i.e., with one dunam elsewhere in exchange for one dunam in the reserve, while the building area of the village was to be extended with part of the reserve. Nothing came of this, however, because the Nature Reserves Authority succeeded in getting the High Court to halt the whole process. At the time of writing, the dispute is far from being solved.[131]

The eruption of violence in Bait Jan and other Druze villages were the outcome of resentment that had been building up since

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[130] For more details, figures and plans of the Israeli institutions to solve the land dispute in the village, see Michal Dror Segal, "*Sikhsokhe Adama 'amokim ve-Ma'arekhet ha-Tikhnun, ha Mikre shel Bait Jan*" (Grave Disputes and the Planning System, The Case of Bet Jan), MSc (Technion, July 1993), pp. 72-93.

[131] Ibid., pp. 96-121.

the 1950s over the land issue. The Ben-Dor report may have seen it coming—one of its recommendations was to release state land on which a new Druze village was to be built so as to help solve the problem in the area. That the government directly interfered in the conflict did not mean it sought a lasting solution. Rather, electoral considerations were at play—elections were coming up in November 1988—together with a sense of "moral obligation" vis-à-vis the inhabitants of a village that had seen more than forty of their relatives sacrifice their lives for the state as soldiers, thirteen of them when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982. The government also hastened to adopt a suggestion made by the Minister of the Interior, Moshe Arens, to equalize the Druze sector with the Jewish one. Another promise for equality, it became the basis for the struggle the heads of Druze local councils began waging in the early 1990s.

This latest promise of equality came twelve years after the Labor government's decision to take Druzes out of the Arab Departments so as to make them equal with the Jews and twenty years after Levi Eshkol's "*kamono kamokhem.*" It was an indirect confession that no equality had been achieved and that the situation was no different than when the formal separation of the Druzes from the Arabs had been declared in 1957. However, while the economic aspects of the recommendations of the Ben-Dor and the Knesset reports were ignored, efforts to create an "Israeli-Druze consciousness" received full official encouragement and, as of 1975, went ahead full speed.

## *Co-opting the Educational System*

Prior to 1975 there had been no need for separate "Druze" schools and a separate "Druze" curriculum. The "negative forces" that emerged in the late 1960s could easily be controlled through political measures for which the authorities could rely on the chiefs. Suggestions for separate school systems had been voiced as early as 1949 by Dr. Hirschberg, of the Ministry of Religions, who recalled the European experience after the First World War when ethnic divisions formed a threat for the new territorial states. Hirschberg had then recommended: "[We] should give every [ethnic] community its own school system in order to prevent them

from feeling as one [Arab] entity....We should be clear in our minds *what kind of education we want to give them.*"[132]

When during the 1960s Druze intellectuals started speaking out against the chiefs and the authorities, Israeli officials began to have a closer look at the existing educational system of the Druzes, singling out three issues for special attention: the lack of separate Druze secondary schools; the predominance of non-Druze teachers in (elementary) Druze schools, and the lack of a special curriculum for Druzes. The Department of Arab Education, asked to report on Druze education, published a booklet in June 1969, which focused on the same three issues.[133] In 1968/69, there was not one Druze high school, though three schools served the inter-communal populations in Safa'amr, Rama and 'Isfiya, the latter a vocational school. Almost immediately it was decided to build a first Druze school, between Yarka, Abu Snan and Julis, in the Western Galilee, and to turn the school in 'Isfiya into a comprehensive one,[134] projects that were specifically aimed at reducing the number of Druzes in the Arab Orthodox College in Haifa and the secondary school in Kufr Yasif (both considered to be producing Arab-Palestinian nationalists), and at encouraging girls to go on to high school.[135]

Druze teachers formed 38 percent of the total number of teachers in villages where the Druzes constituted 63 percent of their population.[136] In order to replace non-Druze teachers, the Ministry of Education decided to give teaching jobs to discharged army veterans and women with high-school certificates[137] and within one year the percentage of Druze teachers rose from 38 to 45.[138] New teachers selected from the army veterans were screened by the

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[132] SA B/310/25, Protocol of session, 6 May 1949 (emphasis added). See also above Chapter 3, p. 99.

[133] DA, File "Education." A booklet published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, "Hitpathut ha-Hinukh ba-'Ida ha-Druzit bi-Isra'el 1948/49-1968/69" (The Development of Education in the Druze Community in Israel, 1948/9-1968/9) Jerusalem, June 1969. It is not clear which department had asked for the report to be written.

[134] Ibid., pp. 22-23.

[135] In 1968/9 there were 541 male and 34 female pupils in the secondary schools, most of them in the Arab schools of Rama, Kufr Yasif and Haifa, and 42 in Jewish schools in Haifa; see ibid., p. 22.

[136] Ibid., p. 20.

[137] Ibid., p. 25.

[138] Ibid., p. 21.

Shin Bet. The upshot of the new policy was that as of the late 1960s many teachers in the Druze schools were non-professionals.

Although the Druzes shared with the other Arabs the same curriculum, the Ministry of Education had begun introducing material on the "special character of the community" (Heb.: *yeḥud ha'eda*) already in 1964 when it added its booklet on *al-nabi Shu'ayb* to the curriculum. In 1969 it followed this up by a series of "lectures among the teenagers on the special character of the community in Israel and the Middle East."[139]

Since they seem to have been carrying out their duties parallel to the Department of Arab Education, it may be helpful to highlight here the kind of guidelines the Ben-Dor and Knesset committees suggested for the changes they wanted to introduce in response to the radicalization of certain elements in the community and to the declining position of the chiefs. The report of the Knesset committee puts the question of Druze education as follows:

> The committee believes that the State of Israel has underestimated the necessity of the education for Israeli-Druze consciousness and that [the state] has done little to educate and inculcate the Druze youth with Israeli-Druze consciousness. This has done damage to the state and its image. When the compulsory conscription's law was applied on the whole Druze community, the State of Israel should have realized it needed also to encourage the intellectuals, to develop the foundation of Israeli-Druze consciousness as the ideological-cognitive basis that could provide Druze youth with a logical explanation of and a psychological background to his complete identification with the state and his readiness to fight for its cause, and to preserve meanwhile his Druze particularity. The committee believes that the present curriculum in the Druze school and the way of imparting it to the Druze child and teenager does not contribute to the deepening of Druze-Jewish brotherhood.... Preparing an independent Druze curriculum with its own texts is of crucial significance, and will serve the continuation of the community's particularist existence.[140]

To that end the committee recommended the following guidelines:

> To set up in the Ministry of Education and Culture a special team of Druze and Jewish intellectuals in charge of education among the Druzes; to include in the curriculum...the elements of the Israeli-

[139] Ibid., p. 27.

[140] The Knesset Report, p. 10.

> Druze consciousness; the teachers and educators should come from the Druze community; Druze senior army officers and IDF's Druze disabled soldiers should be invited to lecture in front of the higher classes, all Druze schools should be integrated in the activities of the GADNA' [the pre-military training for Israeli Jewish teenagers].[141]

Though its wording is slightly different, the Ben-Dor report came up with very similar recommendations. "One of the most important preconditions in the efforts leading to equality...is a good preparation of the Druze youth for his life in Israeli society, in his village, the army or the work places of the village and city. This preparation is concentrated essentially in the educational framework." Ben-Dor thus recommends that:

> [a] curriculum with special Druze features should be introduced soon into the Druze schools. With such a curriculum in place, it may be expected that part of the identity problem and, probably also, part of the feeling of frustration that stems from the lack of clarity in issues relating to identity will be solved. Thus the committee recommends to introduce this curriculum as soon as possible.[142]

While the economic recommendations of the two committees would quickly be frozen, the creation of a Druze Department of Education was somehow decided already before the government, in June 1975, accepted the committees' outlines for a separate Druze educational system. In other words, the Ben-Dor and Knesset committees merely served to give *a-posteriori* legitimacy to a decision that was already there—the Ministry of Education had begun preparing a separate Druze curriculum in September 1974. This certainly raised some hopes among those Druzes who had been championing such course of action. First among those welcoming this development was Salman Faraj, the President of the Druze League/Organization, who lost no time asking the Ministry to be rewarded with a position in the new Druze Department of Education. The Druze Initiative Committee, of course, began an immediate campaign against the policy of "separation" and was able to mobilize a number of Druze intellectuals, the Arab Student Organization led by Azmi Beshara, and even Sheikh Amin Tarif, who feared that the new curriculum would "affect the essence of the community" by revealing the secrets of the Druze sect.[143]

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[141] Ibid., p. 11.

[142] Ben-Dor Report, p. 22.

[143] SA 13021/1352/1/CL, Letter from Salman Faraj to the Director General

Despite Sheikh Amin's reservation, Eli'ad Peled, the Director of the Ministry of Education, informed the district directors on 31 December 1974 that a Committee for Druze Education and Culture (CDEC) had been established:

> As part of the aim of our Ministry to encourage the particularity of the Druze community... a committee... for Druze Education and Culture has been created which will begin to work on 1 January 1975. Salman Falah has been appointed to preside over it. Its main task will be to prepare a curriculum..., set up a teacher's training program, create a framework for pre-army training, preparing the Druze youth for military service in the IDF, strengthen the teaching of civics, [their] Israeli consciousness and strengthen their Druze consciousness in the Druze and Hebrew schools.[144]

Exactly as the Knesset Committee would recommend later that year, a team was formed with Druze and Jewish members who began their work in January 1975 much before a government decision was taken on the subject. Salman Falah resigned on 20 March from his post in the Arab Department of Education so as to take up his new position as head of the new Druze Education Department.[145]

There are no protocols of the first three sessions of the Committee, but those of the fourth session, held on 4 February 1975, suggest that the team already had taken a decision to start preparing teaching material for "Druze tradition" and was now pondering how to go about creating a Druze educational framework through which they could write an entirely new curriculum. Discussions about "Druze traditions" show that the Druze members of the Committee were not at all clear about what could be defined as such, whereupon one of the Jewish members, M. Ayali, Director of the Pedagogic Secretariat of the Ministry, stepped in and suggested

> to advance stage by stage. Logic suggests that every human being must know his tradition, and consequently every teacher must be examined on the material of the Druze tradition....First of all you [the Druze team] should determine what is the Druze credo (*ani ma'amin*). Then it is necessary to determine principles, such as folk-

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of Ministry of Education, 5 October 1974; A. Kupelievich, Director of the Arab Department of Education, to Azmi Beshara, 14 November 1974; Sheikh Amin Tarif to A. Yadlin, Minister of Education, 30 October 1974.

[144] SA 13012/1352/1/CL, Eli'ad Peled to the Directors of the Districts, Sections and Branches in the Ministry, 31 December 1974.

[145] Ibid., Letter of resignation, 20 March 1975.

> lore, history, literature, Druze virtues, festivals, etc. ... [Then] to transmit these as guidelines to a committee that will ... then suggest a detailed program.

It did not take long for the members of the team to be convinced by Ayali's suggestions, and it was decided to set up a committee whose task it would be to prepare the envisioned detailed program for Druze tradition.[146]

Throughout 1975, the number of those on the Committee for Druze Education and Culture fluctuated according to the relations its members developed with Salman Falah. Within two years relations soured between Salman Falah and Kamal Mansur, Najib Nabwani and Kamil Faris and Falah succeeded in having all three removed from the Committee.[147] As the first task of the Committee for Druze Education and Culture was to prepare a curriculum for "Druze tradition," a team headed by Fayz 'Azzam and counting among its members Dr. Gabriel Ben-Dor, Dr. Shakib Salih, Salman Falah and Salih al-Sheikh, after three fruitless sessions, finally came up with a mixed bag of subjects that all somehow fitted the prescriptions of the Ben-Dor and the Knesset reports, Eli'ad Peled's instructions to the districts, and Ayali's suggestions: "Druze honor, women's honor, heroism, poetry and folktales." As festivals were adopted those that had already been recognized by the Ministry of Religions during the 1950s and 1960s, *al-adha*, the only religious feast preserved from the pre-Israeli period, and *al-nabi Shu'ayb* and *al-nabi Sabalan*, the two *ziyarat* that by now had become official festivals. To these two the team wanted to add two more *ziyarat*, al-Khadr in Kufr Yasif, and al-Ya'furi in the Golan Heights.[148] Emphasis was further given to such Druze personali-

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[146] DA, File "Education," no. 1, Protocol session no. 4 of the CDEC, 4 February 1975.

[147] SA, 13012/1352/5/CL. Many letters on the dispute—e.g., Kamal Mansur to Salman Falah, 3 September 1977; Kamal Mansur to the Director of the Cultural Council, 20 October 1977; Salman Falah to A. Shmueli, 1 and 21 December 1977, Salman Falah to Kamal Mansur 21 December 1977. On the changes of the members see DA, File "Education," no. 1 and 2. In April 1975, Fayz 'Azzam and Salman Farraj joined the Committee, ibid., session of the CDEC, no. 8, 25 June 1975. In the year 1977, the number of the Committee increased to 15 members. In April 1978 there were ten members: Salman Falah, As'ad 'Araydi, Yusuf Yunai (Jew), Ya'cob Landsman (Jew), Fayz 'Azzam, Salman Farraj, Farhat Byrani, Salih al-Sheikh, 'Atif Kayuf, and Zaki Ibrahim. At the end of the year Salim Mu'addi, brother of Sheikh Jabr, joined the Committee, Session, no. 1, 23 November 1978.

[148] DA, Session, no. 3 of the Committee of Druze Tradition, 14 May 1976.

ties as "al-Sheikh al-Fadil, al-Amir al-Sayyid Abd Alla, Sultan and Shibli al-Atrash." "Tradition" was then also to include historical topics—early records of the community as contained in the Druze Chronicles, the Druzes in Israel, the relation of the Druzes with the Jews in the Mandatory period, the sect's religious tenets, the law of the Druze religious court, the status of women, the Druzes in the Arab countries, the integration of the Druze in Israel, the [Israeli] security system, compulsory conscription and Druze consciousness.[149]

Not surprisingly, the suggested subjects could neatly be divided among history, folklore, religion, literature and geography and the CDEC saw little difficulty in introducing "special characteristics of the Druzes" and "Israeli-Druze consciousness" into the subjects of history, geography, Arabic, Hebrew, social and political science. On 16 July, Salman Falah and Farhat Birani, who became inspector of history teaching, invited eight teachers and supervisors for a discussion on how to introduce history in the Druze schools and a month later this team set out to write the curriculum for Druze history,[150] with other teams already preparing curricula for Hebrew, Arabic and civics.[151] The following year the CDEC decided it could start introducing experimental material on "the Druze tradition" as of that academic year, 1977/78.[152] By then composition of the Druze Department of Education was decided by Salman Falah who presided over all fourteen committees that were busy preparing a Druze curriculum, each of these committees consisting of five to nine members including the supervisor of the subject involved. The mere existence of these committees meant that about sixty teachers and supervisors were beholden to the Druze Department of Education.[153]

Before the start of the 1977/8 academic year, the CDEC inaugurated its educational and cultural activities by organizing a colloquium for all Druze teachers and headmasters. In two lectures, Salman Falah set out the "new curriculum of the Druze tradition" and "the problematics involved in teaching Druze history."

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[149] Ibid.

[150] DA, Sessions of the history team, 16 July 1976 and 13 August 1976.

[151] DA, Session of the CDEC, no. 7, 29 July 1976.

[152] Ibid., no. 5, 4 April 1997.

[153] DA, Lists of the Committees for Preparation of the Druze Curricula, April 1978.

Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun was invited to speak on "teaching Druze values" and an expert on folklore was invited to say something about "teaching folktales." All of them seemed simply to select various elements from the folklore, history and values of the entire area where Druzes are found which they then adopted for their purpose.[154]

A little before the opening of the school year, the CDEC, which had the full support of Sheikh Labib Abu Rukun, was confronted by Sheikh Amin. Prompted by the criticism of the *'uqqal* and Sheikh Farhud, the leader of the Druze Initiative Committee, Sheikh Amin had summoned the religious sheikhs from all Druze villages to two successive meetings, on 23 and 31 August 1977, at the shrine of al-Khadr, who then went on to condemn the intention to teach the "Druze tradition" in the schools and insisted that it be retracted, reiterating Sheikh Amin's earlier apprehension that such teaching could only lead to revealing the secret tenets of the Druze sect.[155] In order to prevent any teaching of "the Druze tradition" from being part of the new curriculum, Sheikh Amin Tarif met with Salman Falah on 6 October, in the house of Falah's brother, at which they agreed in writing that Salman Falah would "undertake not to teach the Druze tradition in schools." Except for Sheikh Labib Abu-Rukun, the entire Druze Religious Council was present at the meeting and signed the accord.[156]

Nonetheless, Salman Falah went ahead to put into work what had been decided by his Jewish superiors. At the same time he waged a campaign through the staff of the CDEC to bring the religious leaders around, successfully it would appear as Sheikh Amin's objections gradually ceased. Meanwhile Yusuf Nasr al-Din, the President of the Druze Zionist Movement who already in February 1976 had distributed a leaflet[157] in support of the new curriculum, wrote to Prime Minister Menachem Begin asking him to continue the project "of separating the Druzes from the Arabs," as he was deeply concerned over the rise of the Druze "left-wing" faction:

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[154] DA, Program of the Symposium of 14-16 August 1977.

[155] SA, 13012/1352/5/CL, Declaration of the meeting 23 August 1977; and Zaki Kamal, Secretary of the Druze Court, to M. Begin, 9 September 1977.

[156] Ibid., Agreement between the Druze Religious Council and Salman Falah, 6 October 1977, formulated in the way of a legal contract made up between two sides.

[157] Ibid., 13012/1352/2/CL, Leaflet of the DZM. February 1976.

> The dispute [over the curriculum] is between the negative and the positive forces among the Druze youths. The rejectionists are manipulating the religious leadership on the pretext that the secrets of the religion may be revealed.... Please do not stop the teaching of the Druze tradition but enlarge it in order to create a generation [that may be] proud of the Druze nation and loyal to its Zionist [!] homeland.[158]

In the same year the Ministry of Education published a research study on "Fostering the Druze Tradition through the School," which purported to check how eager the Druzes might be to accept the "goals" teaching "Druze tradition" through the school aimed at. The goals were determined *a priori* by the researchers and questionnaires were then distributed first among eighteen Druzes of some public, political or cultural stature and then among 223 ordinary Druzes. The research defines the "problem" from the start as follows:

> The Druze community in Israel is facing the challenge of problems having to do with its identity and fostering its particularity. The expansion of education, the impact of the mass media, the everyday contacts with members of other religions and communities, with Western culture, the Arab-Israeli conflict—all these are aggravating the problem of identity and fostering the particularity of the community.

In order to justify the active intervention of the school in solving the "problem of identity," the researchers alleged that the role of the oral tradition had much diminished following the decline of patriarchal society.[159] They divided the goals of the research into three categories: general and functional, cognitive, and effective goals. The general goals had been defined already at the beginning of 1976 when Arab education in Israel was no longer deemed suitable for "Druze consciousness." Then staff members of the CDEC had spent three long sessions on trying to define Druze culture, wanting in particular to make sure there would no longer be any confusion between "Druze culture" and "Arab culture." Finally, and after Salman Faraj suggested including the term Arab culture "in order to forestall criticism of all the [various] tendencies

[158] Ibid., 13012/1352/5/CL, Yusuf Nasr al-Din to M. Begin, 6 September 1977.

[159] DA, File "Education," no. 2, Ministry of Education, the Center for the Curriculum, "*Tipuḥ ha-Moreshet ha-Druzit be-Imtza'ut Bet ha-Sefer*" (Encouraging the Druze Heritage through the School), Jerusalem 1978, p. 3.

in the Druze community,"[160] they came up with the following formulation:

> The goal of the state education of the Druze sector in Israel is: to build the foundations of Druze education on the values of the Druze and Arab culture, on the aspiration for peace between Israel and its neighbors, on the love of the homeland as common to all the state's citizens and on the loyalty to the State of Israel, on the cooperation to build and defend Israel while stressing the specific and common interests of all its inhabitants, on developing the unique ties between the Jews and Druzes, on an understanding of Jewish culture, on fostering Israeli-Druze consciousness, on planting the Druze youth firmly within the Druze heritage, and on the common destiny between the members of the Druze community in all countries it resides.[161]

As the researchers saw it, the cognitive goals flowed from the general ones. Through the school system

> (1) the pupil will come to understand the past, the culture and the particularity of the Druze community in the Near East and the world; (2) [learn] the central values of the Druze tradition; (3) [become acquainted with] the main religious and historical figures in Druze history; [and] (4) [accept] the traditional connection of the Druzes and Jews in the past and present and the special relation of the Druzes with the State of Israel.

Clearly intended to inculcate Israeli-Druze consciousness, the cognitive goals were then supposed to translate into behavioral patterns:

> (1) the pupil will conduct his life according to the Druze tradition; (2) the pupil will identify with the Druze religion and tradition; (3) the pupil will be aware of the common destiny and unity of the Druze community; (4) the pupil will identify with the special relationship that exists between the Druzes and Jews in the State of Israel; (5) the pupil will develop Druze consciousness and will be proud to belong to the Druze community.[162]

The ten questions in the questionnaire were all geared to these goals, i.e., determining, as so often in research on identity or self-image, the results *a priori*. However, while the respondents recognized the importance of understanding the tradition and the history of the Druzes, most of them identified with Arab tradition

[160] SA 13012/1352/2/CL, Session of the CDEC, no. 3, 7 January 1976.
[161] DA, File "Education," no. 2, "Encouraging the Druze Heritage," p. 8.
[162] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

and culture and rejected the existence of any historical or even cultural relations with the Jews, in particular any connection between Moses and Shu'ayb.[163] Although the overall research study was designed to confirm the goals of the curriculum and its questionnaire did not give the respondents much choice as to defining their attitude vis-à-vis the collective identities of the Arabs and the Jews in Israel, the researchers admitted that though the Druzes desired to preserve their religious faith and the unity and particularity of the community, "the reaction of the respondents attests that an internal debate exists about the position of Druzes in the Arab world, about nationalism and about culture." Use of the vague term "debate" no doubt was intended to blur the unexpected result that most Druzes considered themselves Arabs.[164] Moreover, this "debate" would have proven to be even more acute and deep-seated if supporters of the Druze Initiative Committee had agreed to take part in the survey.[165]

In the self-serving logic of the CDEC, that the "debate" existed was enough justification for a separate curriculum since, as formulated by Amnon Lynn and then by the Knesset and Ben-Dor Committees, its goal was to resolve the "confusion" over Druze identity. The entire new curriculum was completed between 1978 and 1983—eight books on "the Druze tradition," two textbooks for Hebrew with a supplement on "the Druze national tale," two history textbooks, two for Arabic and finally one for civics. All textbooks had been written by the supervisors themselves with almost no input from professional experts. There had been two further constraints. One was that in all material "Israeli-Druze consciousness" and "identification with the state" were to be introduced, the second, to have the curriculum completed in as short a time as possible. As a result, when they came out, the textbooks were replete with mistakes.[166] In response to criticism, the Com-

[163] Ibid., pp. 20-25.

[164] See the conclusion, ibid., pp. 34-35.

[165] SA 13012/1352/5/CL, Session no. 2 of the CDEC, 3 March 1976. In this session the members of the Committee chose the names of twenty-eight Druzes of "status." Apart from Sheikh Farhud Farhud and Muhammad Nafa', the list comprised names of people who all had connections with the authorities. The questionnaires were distributed among the two groups of the interviewees by Fayz 'Azzam, supervisor of the Druze Tradition in the CDEC.

[166] See Fayz 'Azzam and Salman Falah, *Durus fi al-Adab al-Durziyya: Qiyam wataqalie?*, CDEC, Jerusalem, 1978; Salman Falah (ed.), *Durus fi al-Adab al-Dur-*

mittee then set out to revise all texts using the Department of Education at the University of Haifa as an academic cover. These attempts were not very successful either, and till today the textbooks used in the Druze schools reveal an obvious lack of professionalism.

Such topics as "Israeli-Druze consciousness," special relations between Jews and Druzes, the "unique history" of the Druze community were all deliberate efforts to underpin a curriculum that was intended to "justify" separating the Druzes from the other Arabs. In a curious mind twister, values that are decidedly universal and morals that are embraced by all mankind were being singled out as typically "Druze," while social and cultural features common to all Arabs were somehow transformed to become the foundation for the "particularity" of the Druzes.

The history of each Druze village was rewritten with liberal use of popular myths, while descriptions of the various shrines and the ceremonies making up the *ziyarat* revealed a mixture of traditional as well as newly constructed (post-1948) element. A special publication on Druze "holy days" came out in 1979. While *'id al-fitr* had simply been abolished by the Israeli authorities, *'id al-adha* had been carried over from pre-Israel times; other events received official recognition like *'id al-nabi Shu'ayb* (in 1954), or were newly invented, such as *'id al-nabi Sabalan* (1964), and *'id al-Khadr* (1976).[167] Before 1948, all three had been places of *ziyarat* or *nizr*s not just for the Druzes but for Sunni Muslims as well and, as we already saw, there were no fixed dates on which these *ziyarat* were held. Nabi Shu'ayb and al-Khadr have many shrines dedicated to them throughout Greater Syria.[168]

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*ziyya, Mn A'lam al-Duruz?* CDEC, Jerusalem, 1979; Salman Falah and Nazih Khayr, *Durus fi al-Turath al-Durziyya, Qisas Mir Qurana,* CDEC, 1982; Salman Falah and Nazih Khayrm, *Durus fi al-Turath al-Durzi, Al-Turath al-Sha'bi,* CDEC, 1979. Fayz 'Azzam, *Fusul fi al-Turath al-Durzi,* 2 parts (Shafa'amr 1982), 1983, revised in 1990. Apart from the latter, all books contain many mistakes in the spelling of names and terms, dates and figures. Sometimes the questions are incomplete or have no answers.

[167] See Fayz 'Azzam and Salman Falah, *Durus fi al-Adab al-Duruziyya; Al-A'yad* (The Ministry of Education, CDEC, Jerusalem, 1979). These holy days were arranged in the book, probably deliberately, in the following sequence: *'id al-Nabi Shu'ayb, 'id al-nabi Sabalan, 'id al-Adha,* and *'id Sayidna al-Khadr.*

[168] For example *maqams* of al-Kadr are found in Haifa, near al-B'na in the Galilee, in the Golan Heights and many other places; *maqams* of Nabi Shu'ayb are found in Jordan and on the West Bank. The latter was "discovered" by the Druzes in

As already pointed out, what we have here, of course, is an example of "the use of ancient materials to construct invented traditions of a novel type for quite novel purposes." Significantly, "we should expect [the 'invention' of tradition] to occur more frequently when rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed."[169] As Hobsbawm and Ranger show, such "invented traditions" can be uncannily successful—they were so in the case of the Druzes in Israel.

In the late 1990s, a new generation of not only teachers and pupils, but also many people outside the schools are celebrating these holidays without being able to tell whether they belong to "a genuine tradition" or an "invented" one. Falah himself gives the game away when he writes on the *ziyara* of Nabi Shu'ayb: "Our feast...is not new. It existed for at least eighty years and the popular celebration is not *bid'a* (invention!).... In the late Ottoman period it stopped [being celebrated] for unknown reasons but it has been resumed in the era of the [Israeli] state."[170] Whereas still in the 1970s educated Druzes had their doubts that *'id al-nabi Shu'ayb* was the real article and would openly say so,[171] celebrations of all new holidays today are so firmly established among the Druzes that no one hardly ever questions them anymore.

As pro-integrationists, the editors of *al-Huda* were doing everything they could to spread the new "Druze tradition" through numerous articles on the site of the shrine of Nabi Shu'ayb, the "history" of its *ziyara*, the "relations between Shu'ayb ("Jethro") and Moses, and so on.[172] Even the pro-Arab-Palestinian group among

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1973. One of the writers in *al-Huda* commented: "We are content with one *maqam* in Hittin. We are already disputing about the one *maqam* we have. What will happen if we have another one?" *al-Huda*, no. 7 (January 1973), p. 15.

[169] Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, "Introduction," pp. 1-14.

[170] *al-Yaum*, 8 May 1962.

[171] *al-Huda*, no. 28, June 1975, p. 3.

[172] The first issue of *al-Huda* had the *maqam* on its cover. For an article on the name and history of Shu'ayb, see *al-Huda*, no. 4 (April 1972), 7-9; a parade of the Druze Boy Scouts in the *maqam*, ibid., no. 5 July 1972), p. 28; an article by Kamal Mansur, ibid., no. 17 (April 1974), p. 6; an article by Salam Faraj calling the holiday a "national holiday," ibid., no. 18-19 (May-June, 1974), p. 9; article on the history of Shu'ayb, ibid., no. 34-35 (March-April, 1976). Until 1983 one finds literature being added on Shu'ayb. Significantly, Druzes did not have a custom of calling their male children Shu'ayb and the editor of *al-Huda* was the first to do so.

the Druzes was not against transforming the *ziyara* into a formal festival, what they objected to was the political use the Israelis and the community's "traditional leadership" were making of it. The Druze Initiative Committee till today speaks out only against this use of the *ziyara* for "Israeli political aims." Writing in *al-Huda* in 1973 Salman Shihadi sees the *ziyara* as a religious obligation only and rejects the "new history" of Shu'ayb for the political motives behind it.[173] Since 1980 the site of the shrine has become the main location for the so-called "Week of Druze Tradition," which means that each year pupils and teachers are spending days and weeks in preparation of "a successful week of the Druze tradition."[174] Celebrations of the *ziyarat* to the shrines of Sabalan and al-Kadr were added by the CDEC as was the *masirat* (annual march) *al-nabi Sabalan.*[175] With the same enthusiasm, the Committee set about rewriting the community's modern history. Historical figures, such as Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'ni (1690-1632), Sultan al-Atrash (1981-1982), Kamal Jumblat (1917- 1972) and others were shorn almost completely of the historical roles they had played in Syria and Lebanon and were made to serve the goals of Salman Falah's new curriculum.[176]

From the outset fierce criticism was leveled at the new curriculum, especially by the Druze Initiative Committee, the Arab-Palestinian group and left-wing intellectuals among the Druzes. As most of it focused on the political motives behind the curriculum, members of the CDEC for their part disregarded the professional criticism the curriculum evoked as politically inspired. Characteristically, the CDEC used the wave of criticism it confronted to ask for an immediate increase in the budget the government allocated to Druze education.[177] With these funds new teachers

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[173] *al-Huda*, no. 9 (April 1973) pp. 9, 11.

[174] *al-Huda*, nos. 54-55 (February 1980), p. 42, no. 63 (July 1981), p. 29, nos. 70-71 (March-April 1983), p. 17.

[175] *al-Huda*, no. 36 (June 1976), p. 32 and nos. 72-73 (May-June, 1983), p. 17.

[176] See Salman Falah (ed.), *Fusul fi Tarikh al-Duruz*, Parts 1 and 2, (Jerusalem 1980).

[177] DA, File "Education," no. 1, three translated articles. It seems that the CDEC used to translate into Hebrew critical articles written by Druzes, notably those published in the Communist press. For example, a sarcastic article of Ibn Iyas on the qualification of the supervisors and their functions, translated from *al-Itihad*, 6 January 1978; article of Nimr Nimr, an Arab Palestinian nationalist who talked about political motivation, translated from *al-Jadid*, September-October 1977, pp. 49-50; an article of the poet Naif Salim, *al-Itihad*, 17 February 1978.

were attracted to join the staff of the CDEC, the number of the teaching hours could be increased—though never reaching the level of the Jewish school—and some new school buildings were set up. In addition, there was a budget for "informal education" which also passed via the CDEC. This meant that heads of the Local Councils tried to maintain good relations with Falah and his office, though the extra money generally did not go to culture. In this way Salman Falah was behind almost all "Druze culture" activities. Students in the teachers colleges were subsidized from his budget and courses were opened for Druze teachers to help them obtain the necessary qualifications. Each year grants were distributed among university students. Artists, poets, musicians, but also whole football teams were subsidized by these budgets, and groups performing "Druze dances" were sent abroad to present "Druze folklore."[178]

The term "Druze folklore" was invented in the early 1950s when the Foreign Ministry and the Ministry of Information began sending groups of tourists, mainly American Jews, to the Druze villages on the Carmel where they could hear lectures by Kamal Mansur on the "old-new" relations between "two minorities," the Jews and the Druzes, were invited to taste "Druze food" and "Druze pita," while the whole show was rounded off by "Druze *dabka*" accompanied by the *shubaba* or *mijwiz* (kinds of flutes). Visitors invariably left full of admiration for a community that had been able to "preserve its authentic culture" in a time of rapid modernization. What they did not know was that this "Druze" culture was no different from the culture shared by Arabs throughout Palestine, Southern Syria and Lebanon. Gradually the term was taken up by the Israeli press, notably when a dance group organized by Hussayn Nasr al-Din[179] began performing "Druze dances" throughout the country and prominently so on the stage of the "Mother's Garden" in Haifa.

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[178] DA, File "Education," no. 1, Report on all these activities of the CDEC, Ministry of Education, publication of the CDEC, Jerusalem, July 1987. Before the establishment of the CDEC, "Druze" dance teams were sponsored by the Ministry of Information or by the Histadrut. In 1983, for example, the CDEC dispatched to Europe such a Druze dance team, *al-Huda*, nos. 72-73 (April 1983), p. 51.

[179] See the description of one of these visits in *al-Yaum*, 22 October 1952; Nasr al-Din was the first to organize a group of Druze dancers at the end of the 1950s.

"Druze folklore" became one of the components of "Druze consciousness" especially when the authorities were working toward creating a legal basis for the separation of the Druzes. As we already saw, the Israeli official newspaper in Arabic, *al-Yaum*, featured a special section, *Manbar al-Duruz* edited by the ubiquitous Salman Falah, who in one of his first articles wrote that Druze tradition and folklore were threatened by modernization:

> We [the Druzes] have a folk heritage of literature, poems, songs and tales as large, as important, and as truly reflecting our life, society, history and ethics as that of all others. In order to prevent its disappearing [*manbar al-Duruz*] will open an additional corner on folklore, that is to say, on folk heritage, and we will publish the best of what our readers send in, such as Druze sagas, tales, and songs.[180]

For Falah, speaking of a special "Druze folklore" was justified for two reasons. One was that the prominent Arab singers, Farid and Asmahan al-Atrash, were Druzes, the second was the way Druze dance and song had influenced Jewish Israeli dance and song.[181] It seemed not to matter that, after they had moved from Jabal al-Duruz to Egypt Farid and Asmahan never again sang in the Syrian dialect and that Israelis were influenced by unmistakably Palestinian songs and dances.

In 1978, the Folklore Research Center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem published a volume of thirty "Druze folktales" that had been collected by the Israeli Folktale Archives. Principal collector and also co-editor of this volume was none other than, again, Salman Falah. Some of these folktales had been collected from different villages, each tale being known only in the village itself, others—with slight variations from one place to another—could be found in many Christian and Muslim villages. Those about Nabi Shu'ayb were known among the Sunni Muslim inhabitants of al-Sajra, Lubi, Hittin and other Palestinian villages. Only one in the entire collection had a sectarian aspect, "Jethro's revenge on the [Sunni Muslim] inhabitants of the village of Hittin."[182] In his introduction of the book, the Director of the Hebrew University's Martin M. Buber Center for Adult Education, Yaron Kalman, welcomes "the awakening that has begun in the Israeli Druze

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[180] *al-Yaum*, 24 July 1962.
[181] Ibid., 18 June 1963.
[182] Salman Falah and Aliza Shenhar, *Druze Folktales, Thirty Druze Folktales Collected in Israel, Annotated and Indexed* (Jerusalem, 1978).

community—especially over the last two decades—in order to foster its lofty particularity and culture, crystallizing its identity."[183]

In August 1976, Salman Falah presented his boss, Amos Eran, with a program for "Druze Folklore Exhibition" he wanted to mount in Daliat al-Carmel. The budget he asked for was close to one million Israeli lira (ca. $35,000 in today's terms). Introducing his program Falah states that "The Druze are different from the Arabs not only in their external appearance and traditional dress but also because they have distinctive characteristics and specific virtues: they are called *bni ma'ruf*, that is 'men of grace,' because they are polite, hospitable, energetic, courageous, erect of bearing and with fair skin and hair."[184] Among his items of "Druze folklore" there are dresses, furniture, kitchen items, farming tools, cosmetic material, and musical instruments. If, without blinking an eye, he could adopt skin and hair color, politeness and hospitality as "characteristics" that set the Druzes apart from other Arabs, Falah had little difficulty either in hijacking items that were part of Syrian, Lebanese and, especially, Palestinian folklore and appropriate these for "Druze folklore." The initiators of the exhibition may themselves have been aware of the artificiality of this "folklore," but they recognized that through such an exhibition, which surely would be widely reported in radio and television, Druze particularity would be more firmly implanted among Druzes as well as leave an impression on many Jews. It would also bring allocation of more money to Falah's newly established Education Department.[185] When today teachers and students, whose parents had been forced to abandon their traditional way of life through government policies, come and admire the farming tools on display during the "Week of Druze Tradition," for many these ordinary implements any farmer might use have become part of their "own Druze folklore."

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[183] Ibid., p. 14.

[184] SA 13012/1352/3/CL, Program for a Druze Folklore Exhibition August 1976, p. 2. In a volume meant to serve as a guide for teachers, Salman Falah includes all components that make up Druze tradition: ethics, folktales, holidays, personalities. Salman Falah and Fayz 'Azzam, *Duruz fi al-Adab al-Durziyya*, Murshid al-Mu'alim (Jerusalem, 1979).

[185] Ibid., pp. 4-20.

CHAPTER SIX

# BY WAY OF CONCLUSION: WHEN ELITES, ECONOMY AND EDUCATION COME TOGETHER

The Druze Department of Education was dissolved in 1991. Criticized from the start by left-wing Druzes for the way it was purposely separating the Druzes from the other Arabs, the Department came under increasing pressure in the mid-1980s with the growing involvement of "parents councils." Less preoccupied by the political debate, parents focused their criticism on results, voicing their concern about the low level of education their children were receiving. Criticism leveled at the Council for Druze Education and Culture by these various groups as well as by individuals, often directed at the person of its Director, Salman Falah, painted a somber picture for the community's future in a state where education, especially for minority groups, formed the key to economic, social and political advancement. In short, "Druze education" proved to be a failure since it did little or nothing to prepare its pupils for the exigencies of modern society. Especially the Druze Initiative Committee held the CDEC responsible for the way it had "politicized" the educational system through its policy of "separation" and what it termed "*tadriz*" (lit. "Druzization").[1]

Further attacks came from those individuals who since the late 1960s had been in favor of "integration." In 1982, together with a number of demobilized senior officers, they formed *Lujnat al-Mutaba'a al-Durziyya* (the Druze Follow-up Committee)[2] with education one of the main items on their agenda. In meetings with the authorities, especially the Ministry of Education, the "low level of achievement in the Druze schools" came up unfailingly, and in 1989 the chairman of the Committee, Professor Fadil Mansur,

[1] On politicization, see e.g., Rabbah Halabi, "*al-Manhaj fi al-Madaris al-Durziyya U'dda l-Khdmat Qadiyya Siasiyya Bahta*," in *Kitab al-Mubadara*, April 1987, pp. 39-41. For the statistics the Druze Initiative Committee adduced, see their Leaflet of 29 August 1987. For a helpful summary of the issues raised by the Committee, see Usama Halabi, *al-Duruz fi Isra'il min Ta'ifa ila Sh'b* (publication of the Academic Organization of Golan Heights Students, 1983), pp. 26-50.

[2] DA, File "*Lujnat al-Mutaba'a*" (*LM*).

presented them with a document on "the Situation of Druze Education in Israel" whose statistical data show that the education level of the Druzes was the lowest of all communities in Israel.[3]

In an attempt to defend its record, Salma Falah seized every opportunity to present counter statistics, while the "achievements" of the CDEC were constantly trumpeted in its periodical, *Fi al-Turath wal-Tarbiyya* (On Tradition and Education).[4] However, unable to ignore the mounting pressure of the parents councils and the various other groups, the Ministry of Education decided to look into the matter. An assessment committee was established on 2 January 1991—Gabriel Ben-Dor again being in the chair and with none of its other four members a Druze—which a year and a half later recommended to dissolve the CDEC (the reader will recall that in 1975 it was Ben-Dor himself who had been in favor of setting up the CDEC). The committee's final report first gives a survey of the "many achievements" in Druze education "thanks to the devotion and contribution of Mr. Salma Falah," but it then recommends "to disperse the Druze Department" over the departments of the educational districts.[5] While the 1975 Ben-Dor report had specified that it was important to create a special Druze curriculum to solve the "identity crisis" of the Druzes, Ben-Dor's 1991 report nowhere ever so much as raises such questions but instead points to improving the level of teachers' skills and introducing new teaching methods as the main issues to be tackled.[6] It did nothing to take away the ambiguity of the curriculum—which was kept in place, as was the staff that put it together—but, despite the praise it heaped on Salman Falah, it did stop the debate on Druze education from being centered on the person who more than anyone had been responsible for its "Druzization."

Official government statistics in Israel generally refer to two population categories only, "Jews" and "non-Jews," the latter routinely including Muslims, Christians and Druzes. Thus, for any qualitative assessment of Druze education one only has data for the entire "non-Jewish" population to work with. What is obvious from

[3] Private Papers of Fadil Mansur, 27 December 1989.

[4] E.g., Salman Falah, "*Mashakil Asasiyya fi al-Ta'lim al-Durzi bi-Isra'il,*" in *Fi al-Turath wal-Tarbiya,* 1 October 1990, pp. 3-16, and "*al-Ta'lim al-'Ali 'Inda al-Duruz fi Isra'il*", ibid., September 1991, pp. 3-10.

[5] Ministry of Education, Report of Ben-Dor Committee, Jerusalem, June 1991, p. 7.

[6] Ibid., pp. 9-34.

Table 6.1 Number of years of education, Jews – non-Jews

| Year | 0 | | 1-4 | | 5-8 | | 9-12 | | 13-15 | | 16+ | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Jews | Non-Jews | Jews | Non-Jews | Jews | Non-Jews | Jews | Non-Jews | Jews | Non-Jews | Jews | Non-Jews |
| 1972* | 8.8 | 33.6 | 6.0 | 13.3 | 29.3 | 34.9 | 41.7 | 15.5 | 18.7 | 2.3 | 5.5 | 0.4 |
| 1994** | 3.4 | 10.0 | 2.0 | 5.9 | 10.8 | 25.1 | 49.9 | 46.2 | 19.3 | 8.4 | 14.6 | 4.3 |

* - aged 14 and over.
** - aged 15 and over.
Source: SAI 1973, Table XXII/1; 1995, Table 1.22, pp. 629-630.

Table 6.2 Number of years of education, Israeli Druzes, age 35-65, 1995

| | 1-8 | 9-11 | 12 | 13-14 | 15+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | 52.63 | 23.74 | 15.6 | 3.06 | 4.97 |
| Women | 88.04 | 8.23 | 3.07 | 0.58 | 0.09 |

Source: see text.

the outset is the wide gap that has always existed between "Jewish" and "non-Jewish" education (see Table 6.1).

In order to get some idea of how these figures relate to the Druze community I carried out a survey in 1995 (March through June) through a questionnaire distributed among a sample of 1,045 high school students between the ages of 15 till 17. I further relied on Yusuf Hasan's study which proved helpful to arrive at a more or less representative sample.[7] One of my assumptions was that I could thus also arrive at data on the active population of parents between the ages 35 and 65, i.e., years of education, family size, occupation, etc. As Table 6.2 shows, the level of education among the Druzes aged 35-65 is lower than that of the overall non-Jewish population according to official Israeli statistics.

If we further look briefly at higher education, we find that the number of Druzes who graduated from university (in or outside Israel) between 1948 and 1994 stands at 722—the total number of graduates in Israel in 1989 was 270,000 (at a 5 percent annual increase and taking into account Russian immigrant graduates, the total for 1994 might well be 380,000).[8] In other words, for

[7] Yusuf Hasan, *Tmorot ba-Yishovim ha-Druzim.*

[8] The number of Druze graduates collected during the above-mentioned field research for this conclusion; other figures are based on Ministry of Education, *Ma'arekhet ha-Hinukh be-Re'i ha-Misparim,* Jerusalem 1992, p. 118.

Table 6.3 Druzes university students according to faculties (in %)

| | Humanities | Social Sciences | Math and Science | Medicine | Law | Social Services | Engineering |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1966/67 N=32 | 68.6 | | 9.4 | 9.4 | 3.0 | - | 9.4 |
| 1994/95 4=499 | 28.9 | 28.5 | 15.7 | 4.4 | 5.81 | 2.6 | 12.22 |

Source: 1966/67 CDEC; 1994/95, see text.

every 1,000 Israelis there are 72 university graduates while for every 1,000 Druzes this is less than ten.[9] About 65 percent of the Druze students can be found in Haifa (at the University of Haifa and the Technion). As of the early 1990s, the number of women students has been increasing steadily; in 1994/95 women made up 25.65 percent of the Druze student population (at the University of Haifa this was even 48.08 percent).[10] In all, 6.6 out of every 1,000 Druzes are university students while nationwide the figure is 17.3 (total student body for 1993 was 91,000).

As I have tried to show in this study, the way the Druze labor force became structured was dictated by a number of factors. First was the loss of land, which forced a traditional agricultural society to seek ways of employment outside their villages according to the demands and openings of the Jewish market. Second came the economic policy of the authorities, especially the effective subordination of the country's Arab labor force to the Jewish economy. To this we may now add the social structure of the nuclear and extended Druze family.

Two sectors in particular came to replace agriculture, the security services and construction. The change became rapid after 1967 and at present less than one percent of the Druze work force still cultivates their own land, less than 4 percent if we add salaried workers.[11] A research study done in 1983 showed that already then 33 percent of the Druze male labor force was employed either as professional soldiers in the IDF, as border guards or in the prison

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[9] Total population of Israel in 1993 was 5.3 million, the Druze making up 74,600 (excluding the Druzes of the Golan).

[10] Figures based on documents of the CDEC.

[11] By the mid-1990s 3.6% of the Jewish and 7.2% of the non-Jewish labor force was employed in agriculture; *SAI*, 1990-1993.

services. According to the national census carried out in the same year, 27 percent of the Druzes worked in the public services sector (official statistics include "security service" as belonging to the occupations of the public sector, which helps explain this high percentage—for Muslim it is only 18, for Christians 22 and for Jews 23 percent). Our own field survey and that of Yusuf Hasan arrive at a figure of 40 to 42 percent of the Druze male labor force as being employed in the security services. Hasan moreover reports that about 35 percent of them had unsuccessfully tried to find work in other fields.[12] Generally, besides the security services, Druzes find employment in the harbors, the petrochemical factories (especially in Haifa), private security firms, and in other, often unskilled, manual jobs not readily accessible to Christians and Muslims and which Jews openly avoid.[13]

It is here that we come up against a crucial and decisive feature of Israeli Druze society. The Druze labor market is such that on average it does not require high-level education or special vocational skills; on the other hand, discipline, identification with official policies, loyalty and subordination are main requirements in the security services. Conversely, Druze youth, attracted by the prospects of an immediate stable (if low) income and well aware of the limited options in front of them, will from the start not set their educational goals too high. The vicious circle this creates is then further exploited by the authorities to inculcate in them their "Israeli-Druze consciousness." Which brings us back to the "self-image" of the Druzes, elites as well as ordinary people.

As we saw, the "self-image" of the Druzes in Israel is part reconstruction, part invention—traditional features of Druze particularism were transformed into a new kind of "particularism" made to fit the political field created in 1948 by the reality of the Jewish

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[12] According to our sample (parents between the ages 35-65), 20.86 percent worked in the security forces, 12.9 percent were retired or disabled, but had previously worked in the security forces. If one adds the people between the ages of 21-35, one reaches the 40 to 42 percent of Hassan's sample; cf. Hasan, *Tmurot ba-Yishuvim ha-Druzim*, pp. 40-42.

[13] Among other things, this means that Druzes on the whole are to be found in the low income bracket. Here, too, official statistics lump together all data for the various "non-Jewish" communities—monthly per capita income for 1994 was NIS 2,023 (ca. $670) for salaried Jews and NIS 964 (ca. $320) for "non-Jews," the figure for the Druzes presumably falling even below that. This gap becomes even wider, of course, if one looks at the general distribution of income; cf. *SAI*, 1995, Tables 11.7 and 11.8.

state. The occupational structure of the Druze community and the obligatory military service imposed upon it were very much part of this—it is doubtful whether without them the Druze elites and the Israeli policy makers would have been so successful in having the majority of the Druzes internalize this "self-image." One consciously or unconsciously identifies with the job on which one's livelihood depends; in the case of security jobs, the special collective identity these inescapably demand is readily adopted especially when, as with the Druzes in Israel, it is reinforced by a strong communal core. In this way most Druzes in the Jewish state find it "easier" to present themselves as the Jewish majority and the state want to see them than as Arabs or Palestinians—Druzes who openly identify themselves as Palestinians are often "accused" by Israeli Jews of "being insincere" for adopting a collective identity that "does not belong to the Druzes."

This explains why those Druzes who refuse to accept the Druze "self-image" or the Druze collective identity as it is generally recognized in Israel are being marginalized by the Israeli media. Similarly, open protests against the imposed collective identity are invariably interpreted as "temporary feelings of frustration," though the authorities always make immediate efforts—through renewed promises, etc.—to contain these "feelings of frustration." Such protests, for example, were the voting patterns that as of 1969 showed a considerable increase for other than the Labor-sponsored Arab lists, with the RAKAH vote among the Druzes reaching the same level as in many other Arab villages—from 10 percent in 1969 to 15 percent in 1973 and 24 percent in 1977. When in 1981 it dropped again to 21 percent, this was because Zaydan 'Atshi, the Druze candidate for the left-liberal Shinui party, in order to garner support would sometimes adopt slogans similar to those of RAKAH on inequality. In 1984 RAKAH again got 25 percent, but this fell to 17 percent in 1988 and a mere 9 percent in 1992.[14]

[14] Based on a village-by-village breakdown of election results. Since eight villages have a mixed population, picking out the Druze vote for these villages always involves some speculation. Cf. CBS, Inspector General of Elections, Results of elections, 7th Knesset, 28 October 1959 (no. 309) (Jerusalem 1970); 8th Knesset, 31 December 1973 (no. 461) (Jerusalem 1974); 9th Knesset, 17 May 1977 (no. 553) (Jerusalem 1977); 10th Knesset, 30 June 1981 (no. 680) (Jerusalem 1981); 11th Knesset, 23 April 1984 (no. 775) (Jerusalem 1985); 12th Knesset, 1 November 1988 (no. 855-6) (Jerusalem 1989); 12th Knesset, 23 June 1992 (no. 925-6) (Jerusalem 1992).

That by then the Soviet Union had come apart and in the Middle East a so-called peace process was under way may explain why for Druzes sharing the collective identity of Israel's Palestinian Arabs it became more "acceptable" to vote for such "left-wing" Zionist parties as Shinui and, later, MERETZ.

The majority of Israel's Druzes, however, have become loyal to the idea of their communal entity, a measure of the success with which the Israeli authorities were able to ensure that the Druzes would see themselves as a separate community, a "nation" even. This is where elites, economy and education came together. As we saw, the role of the Druze elites was decisive in creating the community's dependency on the security services as their main source of employment, in introducing a special "Druze" curriculum in the schools, and in preventing an alternative elite among the dissenting intellectuals from establishing itself. Thus one will find it difficult to apply the theoretical models of, for example, Pareto, Mosca, Lasswell, Bottomore and others, though their questions and analyses can prove helpful: ever since the Druzes became part of Israel, in 1948, their "leaders" never integrated into the "ruling elite" of the Jewish state, into its political parties or any of its other national frameworks, such as trade unions, popular movements, etc., but see their role as restricted to the affairs and interests of the community—as they view them. But even when it comes to Druze affairs proper, Druze "leaders" continue to deal primarily with the minor problems of individuals, relatives and clan members, rather than with the wider problems facing the community as a whole, their entire focus being on "micro" and not on "macro" issues, such as economic development of the villages, allocation of budgets for the local councils, infrastructure (water, roads), etc. That their role and activities could have been and still are dictated—whether directly or indirectly, visibly or invisibly—by the "ruling elite" of Israel so as to ensure that the Druze "non-elites" remain passive toward such "delicate issues" as land expropriation and the absence of full equality for the Arab minorities, contains that element of tragedy (*musiba*) that confronts the community when it seeks answers for the future.

In the 1970s and 1980s a new generation of more widely educated people put themselves up in competition with the chiefs, seeking to replace them as the community's ruling elite. They soon learned that if they wanted to "penetrate" into and become part

of the existing elite stratum, they would do well to adopt the tactics and patterns that had stood the traditional chiefs in good stead throughout their interactions with the Zionists. Before long they showed themselves acceptable to the general policies of the authorities and were relying on clan politics and concentrating on "micro" issues in much the same way their "elders" had done.

Similarly, even though their political discourse at times could sound somewhat different, those who formed part of the "new" elite relied for their legitimacy on two principal sources, Israeli government officials on the one hand, and the religious authority of Sheikh Amin Tarif on the other. This has also meant that they had no problem adopting the official Druze "self-image" that had served the interests of the traditional elite to survive as the "legitimate" representative of the community vis-à-vis the Israeli authorities.

When, in 1977, Zaydan 'Atshi was elected as Knesset Member for Shinui, many thought this would be the beginning of a new era for the community since he was, and still is, seen as the main exponent of the new educated elite. As we saw, following the results of the 1977 elections, in which the Communists did better than ever before in the Druze villages, the Israeli media again accusingly asked "Et Tu Brute?" When not much later the head of the Druze Initiative Committee was arrested on suspicion of being in contact with the PLO, then a criminal offence in Israel, Israeli television broadcast a series of three documentaries on "The Druzes in Israel," in which Druze supporters of the Arab-Palestinian group were given a chance to reveal a "self-image" that proved to be somewhat different from the one the Jewish Israeli public was familiar with. 'Atshi, the new Druze Member of Knesset, hastened to send an official letter to the Director of Israeli Television in which he complained that the program series had "created the feeling ... that the Hebrew television systematically had set out to harm the image, contribution and character of this dignified community, through an exaggerated emphasis on [its] negative forces." He further warned that the "neglect of the authorities to teach the Druze youth the national and civic values [was] dangerous" because it was this that had created these "marginal groups" which according to 'Atshi, were very much an "exception."[15]

[15] SA 13012/1352/5/CL, Zaydan 'Atshi to Arnon Tzuckerman, Director of Israel Television, 15 November 1977.

In other words, while they may be more adept at playing according to rules of the democratic system, the new Druze elite not only have taken up a role much similar to that of the traditional sheikhs, they are talking much the same language.[16]

Since the late 1980s, and especially following the death in 1992 of Sheikh Amin Tarif and the disappearance from the scene of most "elders" who in the 1950s were responsible for cementing the ties between the Druze elite and the Jewish state, the new "elite" most likely to be accepted, not to say embraced, by the Israeli establishment consists primarily, it would appear, of Druzes who obtained the rank of officer in the IDF, are university graduates but at the same time maintain strong clan ties in their own villages, and fully identify with the community's "positive forces."

[16] See, for example, 'Atshi, *Druze and Jews*, pp. 130-133.

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| DA | Druze Archives (University of Haifa). |
| GHI | Giv'at Haviva's Information Centre (Giv'at Haviva). |
| HA | Hagana Archives (Tel Aviv). |
| IDFA | Israeli Defense Forces Archives (Ramat Gan). |
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Survey of education and occupation of the Druze adult population between the ages of 35-65; data collected through a questionnaire distributed among 1,042 Druze high school students.

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